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DEER CREEK STATION

CASPAR COLLINS

THE LIFE AND EXPLOITS OF AN INDIAN FIGHTER OF THE SIXTIES

BY AGNES WRIGHT SPRING

WITH A FOREWORD BY
MAJ. GEN. HUGH L. SCOTT, U.S.A. RET.

Together with Caspar Collins' letters and drawings, and various photographs and documents connected with his career

NEW YORK

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TO

MY MOTHER AND FATHER

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

To the late Honorable Joseph M. Carey I am indebted for the inspiration of the book. I wish to express deep appreciation to Mrs. Anna Hughes Marks for invaluable services in collecting data; to Mrs. J. L. Benedict for the loan of letters; to Miss Charlotte Baker for the loan of maps; to Bishop N. S. Thomas and Mr. L. R. A. Condit for encouragement; and to Archer T. Spring for aiding in the preparation of this book.

A. W. S.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD *by Major General Hugh L. Scott* 11

PART I: THE LIFE OF CASPAR WEVER COLLINS

I THE OVERLAND TRAIL 15

II THE ENDLESS CARAVAN 21

III THE OHIO HOME 28

IV ON THE PLAINS 35

V MOVING THE MAIL ROUTE 42

VI RECRUITING MORE TROOPS 50

VII MOTHER COLLINS IN THE WEST 53

VIII DAYS OF '64 57

IX THE FIGHT AT MUD SPRINGS 61

X TROUBLES WITH THE INDIANS 70

XI GATHERING OF THE TRIBES 73

XII PLATTE BRIDGE AND THE PLATTE BRIDGE FIGHT 79

PART II: THE CASPAR COLLINS PAPERS 105

ILLUSTRATIONS

DEER CREEK STATION *Frontispiece*

COLONEL WILLIAM O. COLLINS, *Father of Caspar Collins* 18

MAP OF FORT LARAMIE COUNTRY 24

SAWMILL AT THE FOOT OF LARAMIE PEAK 26

SWEETWATER STATION, IDAHO TERRITORY 34

CATHERINE WEVER COLLINS, *Mother of Caspar Collins* 40

PLATTE BRIDGE STATION 66

JOHN FRIEND, *a comrade of Caspar Collins in 1863* 70

THE GRAVE OF CASPAR COLLINS AT HILLSBORO, OHIO 86

DRAWING OF A MOUNTAINEER 108

LETTER FROM CASPAR COLLINS TO HIS UNCLE 136

PLAN OF SWEETWATER STATION 146

FOREWORD

In writing a brief preface to this work I must rejoice in the printing and making available to the public of another link in the history of the Western Plains, over which I have ridden more than 20,000 miles on horseback and which I love with the love of my youth, spent among the Indians, the antelope and the buffalo, and whose history is dear to my heart.

My wife's father, General Lewis Merrill, was stationed at Fort Laramie in 1855 and I have heard him tell of meeting Sir George Gore there, and that grand old man of the mountains, Major James Bridger, the peer of all the mountain men and guides of the West. I have been thrown intimately with General Grenville Dodge, Chief Engineer of Sherman's march to the sea, as well as of the Union Pacific Railway, a great friend and admirer of Bridger's, concerning whom any little bit of additional information is most acceptable.

I have heard much of Caspar Collins during the past forty years, but never so much as is revealed in the work concerning Collins the boy and the man: of Pilgrim ancestry he was one of that hardy American stock from Kentucky and Ohio that played a great part in the settlement of the West.

No doubt the scenes portrayed in "The Covered Wagon" that purport to show the localities mentioned in this book and the life of those times will serve to give added interest to this work.

FOREWORD

I have passed lately several times through the City of Casper where no doubt, as elsewhere on the plains, there are many people to whom the name of Caspar carries no historical association and who know nothing of the sufferings and sacrifices of the American Army. The benefits of these heroic actions are now reaped by the latter generation to whom I recommend a perusal of this work with gratitude to its author.

HUGH L. SCOTT,
Major General U. S. A. Ret'd.

Princeton, N. J.
March 2nd, 1927

PART ONE

THE LIFE OF CASPAR WEVER COLLINS

CHAPTER I

THE OVERLAND TRAIL

DRAWING gaily bedecked Indians riding down imaginary trails was a favorite pastime of the boy, Caspar Collins, as he stretched himself on the grass in the shade of the dogwood trees in his father's yard in Hillsboro, Ohio. Little did he dream, as he drew or painted, that some day a fort, a frontier town, a mountain and a stream in Wyoming would bear his name because he led a charge against three thousand redskins to rescue an ill-fated wagon train.

Wyoming was not then on the map, and the rumbles of the Civil War were still indistinct. But the boy undoubtedly had heard tales of the Indians along the Overland Trail, for the gold rush to California and the migration to Oregon were then at their height. It is evident that the inspiration for his drawings sprang from the rumors and stories of those early days in the opening of the West.

Before the nineteenth century little was known concerning the vast territory lying between the Mississippi River and the Pacific Ocean. The Overland Trail was then only a dim and narrow path made by the monarch of the plains, the buffalo. Coronado, in 1540, explored the Southwest, touching parts of what later became Texas, Arizona, Oklahoma and Kansas. In 1743 the Verendryes, who had left Montreal in 1738 for the Rockies to establish forts, sighted the Big Horn Mountains of Wyoming. They led an unsuccessful expedition into

the Northwest in search of the great sea which, they believed, lay over the mountains. The inland route remained yet undiscovered. Solitary trappers and traders now and then brought to civilization reports concerning the rich forests, wide plains, fertile valleys and towering peaks; but not until 1806, three years after the Louisiana Purchase, was a land route to the Pacific definitely traversed, outlined and officially reported to the Government. In that year Lewis and Clark completed their historic journey through the wilderness from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean.

In the spring of the same year Zebulon Pike, upon his return to St. Louis from an expedition up the Mississippi River, led a party of soldiers up the Arkansas River into what is now Colorado and also explored the territory adjacent to the Rio Grande River. Five years later—in April, 1811—Wilson Price Hunt, a partner of John Jacob Astor, with a party of Pacific Fur Company men crossed the plains with the Columbia River [1] as his goal. Although Hunt's route lay to the north of the way later taken by most of the emigrants, he is generally considered the first white man to take a party over the Oregon Trail. The following year Robert Stuart and a party of six men retraced Hunt's steps, undergoing terrific hardships. Stuart on this trip back to civilization passed down the north side of the Platte River within twenty miles of the spot which now bears the name of Caspar Collins.

In 1822 General William Ashley of St. Louis, a daring frontiersman, organizer of what later became the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, brought a group of men west with him for the purpose of exploring, trapping and hunting. This expedition took him into the Big Horn and Wind River valleys, whence he returned to St. Louis. The next year he returned to

[1] Robert Gray, who sailed from the Atlantic Coast by the way of Cape Horn, touched the shores of the Pacific in 1792 and named the Columbia River.

the West by the Platte River route, and his party made its way from the Mississippi River to the Spanish River in the Great Divide; he explored the Spanish River and changed its name to Green River. According to tradition, Étienne Provot, a trader who received his outfit from Ashley, discovered South Pass, thus opening the way for many thousands of travelers who later came through the Rocky Mountains bound for the Pacific Coast. But one of the best authorities gives the credit of the discovery to Thomas Fitzpatrick, also one of Ashley's traders. Associated with Ashley were some whose names are outstanding in the history of the old trail, such as Robert Campbell, Jim Bridger, William Sublette, Jim Beckwourth and Thomas Fitzpatrick. Jedediah D. Smith, William Sublette and David E. Jackson, members of Ashley's party, purchased Ashley's fur business in 1826 and were the first to take wagons into the Rocky Mountains. Ten wagons piloted by them covered the trip from St. Louis to the Wind River rendezvous in 1827; and several months later, more wheeled vehicles were brought west.

Accounts of the profits being made in the fur business spread rapidly, and in 1832 Captain Bonneville, a Frenchman on leave from the United States army, with a military escort started west in search of a fortune in furs. With him he took several wagons, which traced for the first time the outlines of the wagon road over the western slope beyond the Wind River. This road was destined later to be one of the most famous trails in history. Next over the route came Nathaniel J. Wyeth, whose party, also organized for fur trading in 1832, met with many hardships and took seven months to complete the journey from New England to Fort Vancouver. Two years after he arrived in the West, Wyeth built Fort Hall, a trading post in Idaho.

Even though the trail was fairly plain by that time, it was

with difficulty that Jason and Daniel Lee, missionaries, followed it. But their adversities did not discourage others from following them. Dr. Marcus Whitman and the Rev. Samuel Parker, missionaries, made the trip in 1835 as far as Green River, where they separated, Parker going north into the Jackson's Hole country to work with the Indians, and Whitman returning to the East. Very soon Whitman and the Rev. H. H. Spalding, also a missionary, slowly made their way westward, accompanied by their brides, who were the first white women to make this journey through the wilderness over the trail. This little party reached South Pass on the night of July 3, 1836, and the following morning halted to observe the Fourth of July in as fitting a manner as possible. Dr. Whitman spread a blanket on the ground, placed the Bible over it and, with a flagstaff in his hand, led the company in prayer. He then took possession of all that western territory for "God and the United States." The service closed with the singing of a patriotic hymn led by Mrs. Whitman.

More persons pushed their way across the plains, and in the opening of the new country there was need of a trading post both for the purpose of barter and for protection against hostile Indians. Thus in 1834 Robert Campbell and William Sublette built the first structure on the Laramie River, about half a mile above its junction with the North Platte. This was called Fort William and was used as a trading post. In 1835 it was sold to Milton Sublette, James Bridger and three other fur traders who had joined the American Fur Company. Later the name Fort John was applied to it, perhaps through mistake; to many it was known by that name. A shipping clerk in the East, however, blundered in marking boxes and put "Fort Laramie" instead of "Fort William" or "Fort John, Laramie River"; and so the name, which seemed to be a good one, was adopted. The river itself had been named for Jacques

COLONEL WILLIAM O. COLLINS

Father of Caspar Collins,

with whom he went to Wyoming.

La Ramie, a French trapper, who was one of the first pioneers in that country, and who was killed by the Indians on that stream.

The trading post on the Laramie was built of bricks dried in the sun and was of oblong shape, "with bastions of clay, in the form of ordinary blockhouses, at two of the corners. The walls were about fifteen feet high and surmounted by a slender palisade." [1] The post was sold to the Government for $4,000, and in 1849 Fort Laramie became the first garrisoned post in what is now Wyoming. At that time many changes and improvements were made in the fort. The garrison consisted of Company A and Company E, Mounted Riflemen, and Company G, Sixth Infantry, under the command of Major W. F. Sanderson. In those days it required 123 days for official papers to go to the Adjutant General's office in New York and back to Fort Laramie.

This fort, situated in such an advantageous position, became the most important post in the Rocky Mountains and was the scene of great activity. Thousands upon thousands of overland travelers paused at Fort Laramie to repair wagons, to buy more supplies, to trade with the Indians or to wait for a wagon train to be formed so that they could proceed under escort of government troops.

The start of the long trip towards the setting sun was usually made from Independence, Kansas, and from that place for forty miles the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails were the same. Then the former, a road of the trader, branched to the southwest, while the latter, the trail of the home-seeker, turned towards the northwest, with a simple signboard pointing the way to the "Oregon Country."

The Oregon Trail followed the Platte River and ran past Scott's Bluffs and Chimney Rock and on to Fort Laramie.

[1] Parkman, *The California and Oregon Trail.*

From there the trail crossed the central part of Wyoming through Devil's Gate, near Independence Rock, the latter being known as the "Register of the Desert" because of the hundreds of names carved upon it, crossed the Continental Divide, and then followed the Sublette Cut-off Trail from the Big Sandy to Bear River. Another branch turned southwest to Fort Bridger and on to Salt Lake, or veered northwest from Bridger to Fort Hall and on to the Oregon Country.

While Father De Smet, General John C. Frémont and many others were making their way into unexplored territory, the constant rumble of wagon wheels could be heard along the Overland Trail as the emigrants plodded along on their way to new homelands.

CHAPTER II

THE ENDLESS CARAVAN

REPORTS were brought back to the states east of the Mississippi River that fertile, thickly wooded, splendid land could be had from the Government by merely "filing on" or "staking out a claim"; gold could be found in abundance; in truth, the Promised Land waited ready to bestow its blessings. With the Mormons emigrating in incredible number in 1847, and the gold-seekers in 1849, the great tide of emigration swept along with the cry "Westward, Ho!"

The ordinary outfit consisted of a wagon, two yoke of four-year-old steers, one yoke of cows and several extra cows. A leader was usually appointed to decide the most important affairs of a party. Usually two or three families, each with several wagons, traveled together, but their group was not alone on the prairie, for they were really part of one great train, never out of sight or hearing of other parties—an endless caravan. At times the roads were so full of wagons that all could not travel in one track; this accounts for the double roadbeds seen in so many places along the old trail.

Ezra Meeker, who crossed the trail in 1852, says:

"The army of loose stock that accompanied this huge caravan—a column, we may say, five hundred miles long without break—added greatly to the discomfort of all.

"Of course the number of cattle and horses will never be known, but their number was legion compared to those that

labored under the yoke or in the harness. A conservative estimate would be not less than six animals to the wagon, and surely there were three loose animals to each one in the teams. By this it would appear that, as sixteen hundred wagons passed while we tarried four days, nearly ten thousand beasts of burden and thirty thousand loose stock accompanied them. As to the number of persons, certainly there were five to the wagon, perhaps more; but calling it five, eight thousand people, men, women and children, passed on during those five days—many to their graves not afar off."

Many parties looked ahead in making their preparations for the trip to Oregon or California and took only the foods with the most nourishment; they were careful in the selection of stock; and they carried only the furniture and clothing needed. They stopped on the way to take needed rests, to boil their water or to prepare yeast bread. These, for the most part, reached their destination in safety.

But there were others who tried to take all their household goods with them and were careful neither in the water they drank, nor in the food they ate, nor in the selection of their stock. As the stock began to give out and the journey seemed endless, the weary and heartsick travelers lightened their loads by dropping at first a table or cupboard, or perhaps a bedstead or a heavy cast-iron stove; then bedding, feather beds, blankets, quilts and pillows. Sometimes even abandoned wagons containing provisions, such as flour and bacon, were seen standing by the roadside.

And new-made graves frequently testified to the lightening of the human loads. A plague seized the people as they came across the dry prairies of Nebraska and Wyoming. They did not seem to know what caused it nor how to cope with the disease. The sickness was in all probability typhoid fever. The

estimate of five thousand deaths on the Overland Trail in one year is small. A myriad of persons traveled on, saddened by the fresh mounds—but with nothing left to do but to push forward.

One of the great handicaps of the early days on the frontier was the lack of communication with the East. Letters intended for various posts were usually sent to Fort Leavenworth and then forwarded whenever possible. John M. Hockaday and William Liggett realized the situation and in 1851 established a stage line for the purpose of carrying mail and packages from St. Louis to Salt Lake City. The government contract required the round-trip journey to be made in forty-two days. Passengers also were carried, and after a time the trip was made semi-monthly.

With this great emigration and settlement of the West, military protection was a necessity. And in order to supply the soldiers at the various posts and also to transport provisions to the settlers and emigrants, big freighting outfits were organized.

Russell, Majors and Waddell, experienced freighters of the Santa Fe Trail, turned their attention to the northern route and in the spring of 1858 had at work on the western plains thirty-five hundred wagons, forty thousand oxen and four thousand employees. This company also purchased the stage line then in operation and in the spring of the next year established a daily passenger and mail service, using Concord coaches and Kentucky mules. This line, which ran between Salt Lake City, and Atchison, Kansas, was continued to San Franciso by a similar line under the management of Ben Holliday.

Upon the establishment of this daily transportation system to the Pacific Coast, the eyes of the nation were focused upon events that happened along the way, and the daily newspapers

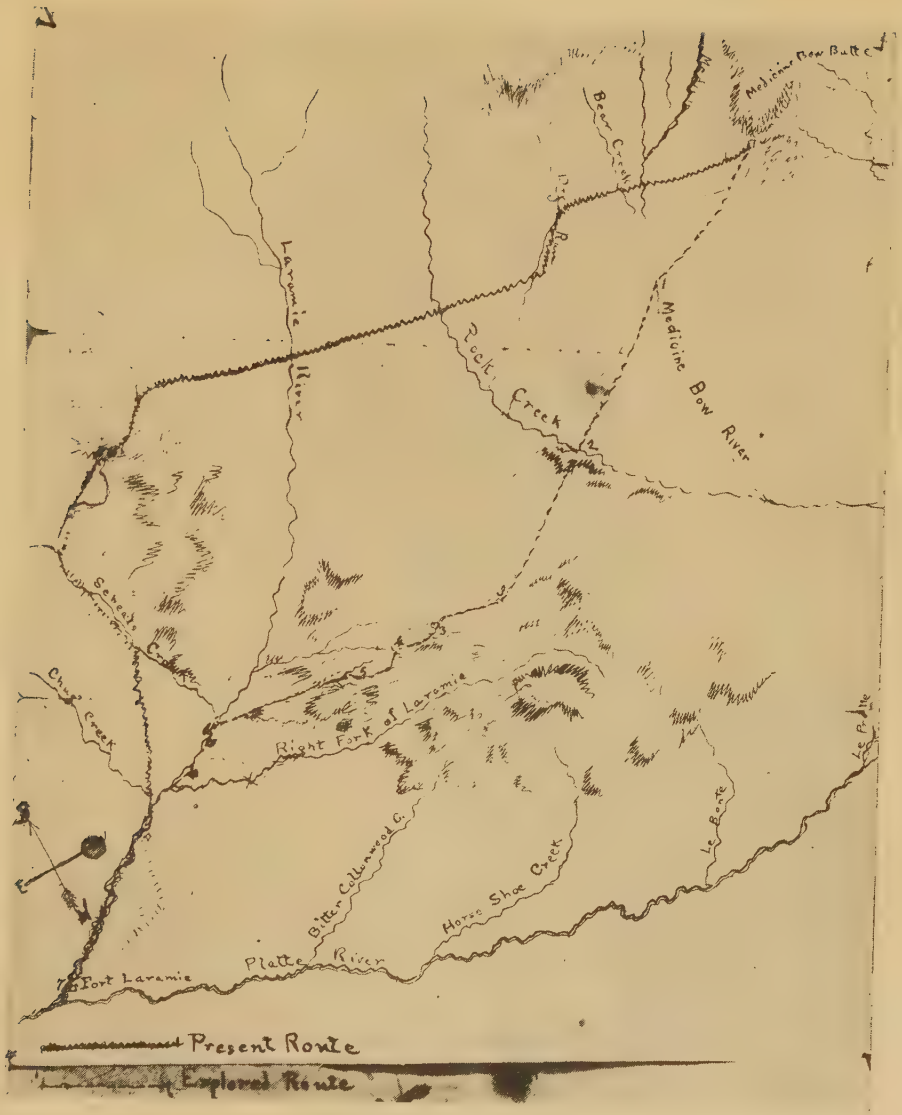
were lavish in the space allotted to stage robberies, attacks by Indians, terrific snowstorms along the stage route and many other incidents of stirring interest.

Beyond the plains and mountains at the western end of the long line of canvas-covered wagons, there had been rapidly developing a new empire. With great natural wealth, fertile soil and a wonderful climate, California was fast becoming a most desirable addition to the Union.

Back across the vast prairies and snow-capped peaks—back beyond the Mississippi River—there had been steadily increasing a smoldering fire that was destined to burst into the flame of the Civil War in 1861. Far-sighted individuals became concerned as to whether the slavery or antislavery cause would have the support of California in the event of war. From a military and economic standpoint California was invaluable. But two thousand miles of unsettled land stretched between California and the Union.

Mr. B. F. Ficklin, then General Superintendent of Russell, Majors and Waddell, conceived the idea of a pony express, which, to his mind, would provide much closer communication between the East and the West. He told his scheme to Senator Gwin of California, and the latter at once became an enthusiastic advocate of the plan. The bill that Senator Gwin introduced in Congress in 1855 to establish a weekly letter express service was, however, tabled and "killed." At that time mail was being carried over three routes—through Panama, over the southern or Santa Fe route, and over the central route across Wyoming and to San Francisco by the way of Salt Lake City.

California was chiefly on the side of the Union, but there was within its borders a group of very strong Secessionists. The Unionists realized that some method of communication must be established in order to keep the Californians in constant touch



MAP OF FORT LARAMIE COUNTRY

with the Union. Thus it was that when William Russell, of the firm of Russell, Majors and Waddell, went to Washington on business in 1859 and met Senator Gwin, he readily accepted the Senator's suggestion that a better mail route be established and assured him that his company would undertake the organization of a pony express.

Although Russell's partners felt that the venture would be a great financial risk, they felt that he must keep his word to Senator Gwin. So they assisted him in forming a corporation known as the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company. On April 3, 1860, the first ride of the pony express was made, the trip from St. Joseph to Sacramento being covered in nine days and twenty-three hours. The riders bound for the East on this first run covered the distance in eleven days and twelve hours. The pony express cut an average of ten days from the schedule usually required to carry mail by stage coach.

The official route of the pony express after crossing the Missouri River at St. Joseph [1] ran at first west and south through Kansas to Kennekuk; then northwest, across the Kickapoo Indian reservation, to Granada, Log Chain, Seneca, Ash Point, Guittard's, Marysville, and Hollenberg. Here the valley of the Little Blue River was followed, still in a northwest direction. The trail crossed into Nebraska near Rock Creek and pushed on through Big Sandy and Liberty Farm to Thirty-two Mile Creek. Thence it passed over the prairie divide to the Platte River, the valley of which was followed to Fort Kearney. For about three hundred miles out of Fort Kearney, the trail followed the prairies; for two-thirds of this distance, it clung to the south bank of the Platte, passing through Plum Creek and Midway. At Cottonwood Springs the junction of the

[1] Root and Connelley, *The Overland Stage to California via Bradley: The Pony Express.*

North Platte and the South Platte was reached. From here the course moved steadily westward, through Frémont's Springs, O'Fallon's Bluffs, Alkali, Beauvais Ranch and Diamond Springs to Julesburg, on the South Platte. Here the stream was forded, and the rider then followed the course of Lodge Pole Creek in a northwesterly direction to Thirty-mile Ridge. Thence he journeyed to Mud Springs, Court House Rock, Chimney Rock, Scott's Bluff and Fort Laramie. From this point he passed through the foothills to the base of the Rockies and then went over the mountains through South Pass to Fort Bridger. From there he traveled to Salt Lake City, Camp Floyd, Rub Valley and Mountain Wells. Crossing the Humboldt River, he reached Bisby's and Carson City, Nevada, and Placerville, California. Thence he traveled to Folsom and Sacramento. Here the mail was taken by a fast steamer down the Sacramento River to San Francisco.

Previous to the establishment of the pony express, a telegraph line had been in operation two hundred and fifty miles east from San Francisco through Sacramento to Carson City, Nevada. And many important messages relayed by pony express were telegraphed westward from Carson City. A subsidy of $40,000 a year for ten years was offered by the United States Government to the builder of the first telegraph line across the plains. Edward Creighton was the successful competitor, and on October 24, 1861, his line was completed and in working order. This of course meant the downfall of the pony express, for the telegraph line accomplished the purpose in much less time and at much less expense than the pony riders could; and the dashing figure, flying from station to station in the face of storm and even death itelf, became a memory. Telegraph stations were built at Fort Laramie, Horse Shoe, Deer Creek, Platte Bridge, Three Crossings, Rocky Ridge, Sweetwater Bridge, South Pass, Upper Crossing,

SAWMILL AT THE FOOT OF LARAMIE PEAK

(Crayon drawing by Caspar Collins)

Sand Creek, Fort Bridger and several other points within the territory of the present state of Wyoming, then known as Idaho Territory.

It did not take the Indians long to discover the value of the telegraph to the white man, and they were continually cutting the wires, tearing down the poles, burning stations and killing the keepers. Later when, on account of Indian hostilities, the stage route was moved to the southern part of Wyoming, Creighton constructed a telegraph line to follow the new route across the Laramie Plains and through Bridger Pass. This line was not completed until 1865. In the meantime it was necessary to keep soldiers stationed at the telegraph offices on the northern route.

The year 1861 was most eventful. Indian tribes that had heretofore been peaceful became hostile, and when the regular soldiers who had been stationed through the West were called away to fight in the Civil War, the red men were quick to take advantage of the situation. After harassing the emigrants and settlers by means of small attacking parties, they finally began to organize into large bands.

Upon the business failure of Russell, Majors and Waddell in the winter of 1861, their stage line and freighting outfits fell into the hands of Ben Holliday, who at once set to work to stock up the stations and to place new men and equipment all along the line in Wyoming. Just as he had everything in readiness for the reorganization of the stage system in the spring of 1862, the Shoshones swooped down along the stage route for a distance of two hundred miles, captured all the horses, mules and stores, and left the coaches standing out on the prairies. This raid and other hostile acts of the various Indian tribes caused an appeal to be sent to President Lincoln, asking that more troops be sent into the West.

CHAPTER III

THE OHIO HOME

CASPAR WEVER COLLINS was born in the family home on the corner of Beach and High Streets at Hillsboro, Highland County, Ohio, on September 30, 1844, and was of straight Puritan and Pilgrim stock on his father's side. His father's ancestors came from England to America in 1634 and were prominent in church and civic affairs of Massachusetts and Connecticut for more than two hundred years before his father went to Ohio.[1]

They were sturdy, freedom-loving colonists and above all were law-abiding. A number of them made splendid soldiers in the French and Indian War, the Revolution and the War of 1812. Some of the hardships which young Caspar later endured on the western plains were comparable to those suffered by one of his ancestors, Jabez Collins, who was captured by the British in New York in the Revolution and, when liberated in midwinter, left the blood-stained prints of his bare feet on the many snow-covered miles to his home.

Caspar's father, William Oliver Collins, was a lawyer who felt the call of the pioneer when he was a young man, and early in life went from Connecticut to make his home in Ohio, which was then a newly developing country. Mr. Collins was always a companion to his son and taught him to accept responsibility and to respect duty. He himself became active in public serv-

[1] *See* Appendix.

ice, was a speaker of eloquence, was a great nature lover, and was always keen for outdoor sports.

The boy's mother, whose maiden name was Catherine Willis, was the daughter of an eminent engineer. She was of Scotch and German ancestry, but her people had been American-born for three generations. From his mother, Caspar inherited a great love of home, an ability to paint, and an unusual interest in plants and flowers. Mrs. Collins was a student of nature and took great pride in the old-fashioned flower garden and the fruit trees which were planted in the rolling slope that stretched back towards the forest from "Dogwood Knob," the Collins home.

It was in this home that Caspar spent his early life. From dawn until dark he played with his sisters, Josephine and Mary, and his companions at his home or else over on the southern edge of town at "The Hamlet," the home of his uncle, Dr. Carlton C. Sams. In the dining room of "The Hamlet" they created their Grammar Society, with a constitution and by-laws which placed a penalty of one penny for each mistake in English. The charge list grew so long and formidable that Caspar went into bankruptcy and deserted the group. At the end of the year the girls arranged a birthday fête in that same dining room and persuaded Caspar, though not a member in good standing, to join in the celebration. For this occasion a cousin had skillfully concocted a huge sponge cake, which adorned the center of the table, and everything which children like to eat was purchased for the feast with the forfeit money. Light-hearted and gay the children played all evening with Caspar, who led the rest in wit. Every crumb of the feast was eaten before the children deserted the board to play games until the curfew rang.

Caspar Collins, a lovable lad with red hair and freckled face, was a great tease. At one of the play parties in the old flower

garden, he brought in a basket of grapes from a near-by vineyard and proceeded to squeeze the purple juice into the tiny glasses on the toy table, adding a little water. When his sister Josephine, who was a fanatical prohibitionist, drank hers, Caspar roguishly held up his amethyst-dyed glass and said: "My, Josie, that was wine and you drank it." The girl dashed the wee crystal from his hand and, bursting into tears, fled to the house. At once the boy was repentant and tried to comfort her with loving words, but the good time was spoiled. Caspar liked to dress "like a cowboy," with his hair tousled, a red bandanna handkerchief around his neck or waist, his coat off, his suspenders hanging and his toes turned in. He was a hero to all because he dared to do mischievous though harmless things and to risk punishment.

He attended the public schools and then the academy of which Professor Isaac Sams was in charge; later, after the academy was destroyed by fire, he attended a private school for boys, taught by Professor Sams. He always saw the bright and humorous side of any experience and was a great source of amusement to his schoolmates.

From his father, Caspar inherited a love of hunting, fishing and outdoor sports. When he was about ten years old he used to go fishing with a schoolmate, Cotton Mather. They were generally the first to try their rods in the spring, and Caspar knew all of the "best holes" on Clear Creek from its headwaters down to Barry's Mill, on the Chillicothe Pike. As soon as these young sportsmen were old enough to be trusted with guns, they knew where to find the quail, rabbits and squirrels, and many times they hunted through the woods where the remains of Caspar now lie.

A love of books and pictures was inherited from his mother, who very early in his life taught him to draw and paint. This became the ruling passion of the boy, and his decorations, often

crude, but with the true artist's touch, could be found on books, desks, letters—wherever he could make a line or put on a color. Today his initials and a small likeness of himself are in a pane of glass in the old Collins home, where he cut them with his diamond ring. This was the first diamond ring to be owned by a Hillsboro boy. The colored crayons under his deft manipulation shaped miniature birds, animals or human beings. The picture in his mind, or one made by the suggestion of a boy friend, appeared in a few seconds with the aid of his crayon. When busily drawing one day, instead of studying his spelling lesson, he was roused by Professor Sams who cried out: "Collins, go to the blackboard. Write: 'The knock-kneed girl need not knead the bread.' " Do you suppose he did it? No. Instead of spelling the words, he made a chalk sketch of a knock-kneed girl looking at a pan of bread dough.

The lad was always laughing as his nimble fingers sketched Indian tepees on a stray leaf of paper, a table or a desk. Many hours he spent under the light and shade of graceful birch or dogwood trees on the lawn, "coloring up" his Indians, their tents and their dogs. He always had two or three dogs at his heels or climbing over him when he stretched out and threw back his red head to rest.

From his boyish pranks and romping schoolboy days, Caspar was suddenly brought face to face, while yet in his teens, with the tragic troubles that plunged our nation into civil conflict. When the South seceded, the boy, catching his father's loyal spirit, was eager to give his services to help preserve the Union.

This fine patriotism of his father was expressed early in the summer of 1861 when William O. Collins wrote to the War Department at Washington offering to raise a regiment of cavalry in southern Ohio and to put it in training to be in readiness to aid Kentucky or to fight wherever necessary. With

intense eagerness Caspar waited for the news which finally came, after the usual military delay in accepting such new propositions, and hurried to tell his playmates that his father had been appointed a colonel with the authority to raise a regiment of cavalry.

The new colonel had no trouble in recruiting men for his regiment, but good cavalry horses and equipment were hard to find. Then came an order from the Secretary of War stopping further enlistment of cavalry, and so it became necessary to disband all the recruits over a single battalion of four hundred men. Caspar's father resigned the position of colonel of the regiment and was appointed lieutenant colonel, in order that he might be sent at once to the front.

His desire to serve his country was soon realized, and companies A, B, C and D of his regiment, organized as the Seventh Ohio Cavalry, were consolidated with the Sixth Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, First Battalion, the whole being rendezvoused at Camp Denison, Ohio. On February 10, 1862, Colonel Collins went to Washington to offer his battalion to the Government. His offer was accepted, and on March 13, 1862, the regiment was ordered to report to Major General Halleck at St. Louis for the purpose of joining the expedition then organizing for the Southwest.

Caspar, then not eighteen years old, was too young to enlist in the service, but he was feverish to go with his father. His mother's anxiety may be imagined. She spent many a sleepless night while the question was being decided. Caspar, she was sure, did not realize the serious hardships and the responsibilities which he was facing, yet she could hardly deny him the request to serve his country. After much discussion and a thorough consideration of the situation, the parents finally yielded to their boy's pleading and decided to permit him to accompany his father.

Everything in Hillsboro was confusion as the men made preparations to go to war. Caspar spent busy moments in selecting the few things which he could take with him. But there was no time to waste, and in a few hours the outfit was in complete marching order, ready to go to Camp Denison.

As the people of the town gathered to bid the men Godspeed, the young soldier saw tears in the eyes of the boys and girls with whom he had so recently romped over the broad lawns and through the woods. For a second a lump in his throat choked him as he saw his mother's eyes upon his face. Then the bugle sounded its clear call warning the men to take their places. Straightening his shoulders and with head held high, Caspar turned a brave, smiling face upon his friends and relatives and, with a gay little joke about chasing Rebels, mounted his horse and fell into line.

He had just become accustomed to camp life at Denison when orders came for the trip west, and he, like the others, was anxious to get into action. After an uneventful trip on the train from Camp Denison, the regiment reached Benton Barracks, Missouri, about March 18, 1862. There they prepared to move with the expedition into the Southwest.

By that time, however, Indian troubles had become so numerous on the western frontier that all land communication with California had been cut. The situation along the old Overland Trail was most acute, and when the appeal for more troops reached Washington orders were immediately issued for the Ohio volunteer regiment to proceed at once across the plains to Fort Laramie and to South Pass to protect the mail and telegraph lines and the various routes of travel throughout the Rocky Mountain region, instead of fighting the Confederates.

And thus it was that many and many a night during the next two years the young friends of Caspar gathered at lamplight

to read his letters in which he told of his journey and his experiences in the western country. And they always eagerly turned to the last page to see the row of tepees and the single file of Indian braves marching across the paper—the creations of Caspar's pen.

Sweetwater Station Idh. Ter.

CHAPTER IV

ON THE PLAINS

WILLIAM OLIVER COLLINS, the father of Caspar, was born in Somers, Connecticut, and was fitted for college at the Wesleyan Academy, Wilbraham, Massachusetts, of which the Rev. Wilbur Fiske Dee was then the principal. After finishing his work at the academy, he attended Amherst College four years, graduating in August, 1833.

The early death of his young wife and signs that his health was failing made William Collins decide to go west. In the fall of that year he went to Hillsboro, Ohio, where he became a law student with the firm of David Starkweather, Aaron Manelno and Dwight Zaron. David Starkweather was later made Minister to Chile. After studying law in the offices of John C. Wright, the Hon. Edward King and Judge Timothy Walken, William Collins received a degree at the Cincinnati Law School. He was admitted to the bar September 9, 1835, and settled at Hillsboro. From 1837 to 1840 he was prosecuting attorney of Highland County. He served also as secretary of the Milford-Chillicothe Turnpike Company, who owned the first turnpike touching Highland County—in fact, the first in the state. This position he held for twenty years.

Ten years after he went to Ohio, the young lawyer married Catherine Wever, of Maryland. Their home life was ideal.

At the organization of the Hillsboro and Cincinnati Railroad Company in 1849, Mr. Collins was elected president.

He held that office as well as that of director of the Belpre and Cincinnati Railroad for three years, until the combination of the companies took place. He was a successful lawyer and for nearly three years was a collector of internal revenue for the sixth congressional district of Ohio.

As a trustee of the Hillsboro Academy, Mr. Collins took an active part in the building and management of that institution, which became so useful under the guidance of Professor Isaac Sams. During 1859 and 1860, while he was president of the Highland County Agricultural Society, he advised the purchase of excellent grounds and did much to improve the work of that organization.

In 1861, while he was a member of the state senate of Ohio, representing Ron and Highland counties, he received his appointment as colonel of volunteer cavalry. He then commanded the First Independent Battalion, Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, and the Eleventh Regiment, Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, until he was mustered out of the service in April, 1865.

Although he was disappointed when he received orders to fight Indians on the western border instead of getting into the thick of the fight in the South, Colonel Collins did not hesitate to lead his men to the West. The march overland from Fort Leavenworth across almost six hundred and forty miles of territory was made at a most unfavorable time of year for crossing the plains, but the regiment, following the old Overland Trail, made the march in less time than it had ever been made by any body of troops.

Anticipating possible scurvy from the unbalanced ration of his men, Colonel Collins purchased a seine about twenty-five yards long, which was in almost daily use when the regiment was marching near the Platte River. Each company had its turn, and Caspar took especial delight in assisting the men to bring in good hauls. A detail of eight or ten men would often

bring into camp several bushels of fish after a few hours of seining.

After leaving the main Platte River at Fort Kearney the men found no game fish in that river nor in the North Platte or its tributaries except a fish which they called the glass-eyed pickerel and which is now generally known as the wall-eyed pike or pike perch.

For part of the journey the Ohio troops were accompanied by the Wisconsin artillery. With the cavalry leading, followed by the artillery, the wagon train and the ambulance, the cavalcade wound its way slowly across the plains, enduring storms, thirst, heat and dust—in fact every discomfort imaginable. Some days they made thirty miles and more on the march. Colonel Collins engaged Leo Pallardy, a Frenchman, as an interpreter and found him a great aid in the Indian country.

It was a relief for the regiment to reach Fort Laramie,[1] where the men could rest after the long stretch of weary miles which they had just traversed. But the rest was very short. Four days after its arrival, the regiment received orders to proceed on Wednesday, June 4, over the Overland Mail Route to the Three Crossings of the Sweetwater, for the purpose of protecting the property and employees of the Overland Mail Company and the telegraph company from that point to the western boundary of the department, which was then the eastern boundary of Utah, ten or fifteen miles east of the crossing on Green River. Colonel Collins was also authorized to station at exposed or dangerous points such detachments as he thought necessary and to establish his headquarters at any point on the line which he might decide was most convenient for carrying on operations. In the same order there appeared a clause which said that Colonel Collins should temporarily incorporate with his "command, Capt. Lot Smith's company of Utah volunteers

[1] *See* Appendix.

and if the safety of emigrants, Overland Mail property, or the telegraph line demand such a course he will disregard department boundaries and order Utah troops and a portion of his own command if necessary beyond the bounds of this department, etc."

Colonel Collins immediately moved his regiment from Fort Laramie west over the Overland Trail, marching the first day to Bitter Cottonwood and the next day to Deer Creek, where he found an emigrant train waiting for the protection of his men. He detached a squad of thirty men under the command of Lieutenant O. S. Glenn to guard the emigrant train and to follow the command and join it at South Pass.

On the way to South Pass, at a point called Wagon Box, about twenty-two miles from Deer Creek, Lieutenant Glenn and the train were attacked by approximately five hundred Indians, who were on the north bank of the Sweetwater, the train being on the south bank. A messenger was dispatched to Colonel Collins, then at Willow Creek, about four miles northeast of South Pass. Upon receiving the message the colonel started to Wagon Box with a squad of sixty men, who found upon their arrival that Lieutenant Glenn's men had driven the Indians off and were desirous of pursuing them. They could not, however, cross the river, as it was then a roaring torrent from the melting snow in the mountains.

The emigrant train and the escort reached South Pass in safety, and the soldiers were returned to their various companies, since Colonel Collins thought it then safe for the travelers to proceed without guard. Caspar stayed with the main body of troops on the journey from Fort Laramie to South Pass.

On July 2, Colonel Collins and a scouting party of ten or twelve men crossed Sweetwater River on a raft which they

had built and went up the river for about twenty miles looking for a crossing.

John B. Lee, Aaron H. Ruse, John T. Foster and Gustavus P. Glenn of Company D, John McGleuchy of Company B and Murphy (perhaps John Murray) of Company E assisted the colonel in getting the men and the rations across on the raft and in swimming the horses. After the colonel had left, these men reported that they had been ordered by him to proceed up the south side of the river to a point at which they could cross and join his party. They drew six days rations, swapped horses with their comrades, borrowed an extra revolver each and started on their journey. But they had no intention of joining the colonel.

On the evening of the same day, Colonel Collins and his squad returned, recrossed the river with some difficulty—one of the men, Walter Sinclair, having to swim the river—and upon their arrival in camp discovered that the men had deserted. Captain Lot Smith and a squad of men were immediately detailed to pursue the deserters, but, after trailing them as far as Fort Bridger, gave up the chase. The men were never heard from again.

A permanent camp was established by the Ohio troops at South Pass, and for a time Caspar stayed there with Captain Hays's company. In August he accompanied his father and a party of soldiers on an expedition to Wind River. While they were gone, the Indians killed a teamster at the camp and stole the mules which he was herding. The mules were later captured by Captain Hays.

A short time after that, the boy went with his father and some of the men on another expedition, this time to Green River. Included in this party was Jim Bridger, renowned guide and frontiersman, who was with Colonel Collins a great deal

during the time the Ohio volunteers were stationed in Wyoming.

On August 31, 1862, Colonel Collins and his son, with an escort, returned to Fort Laramie, where they received a friendly visit from a party of Cheyennes consisting of about three hundred persons in all.

Young Collins became very friendly with the Indians and soon was able to talk to them in the sign language. His love of hunting and fishing continued, and he spent much of his time while at Fort Laramie hunting near there or studying the flora and fauna. There was always plenty to be done at that fort, and Caspar entered into all activities whenever possible.

Much of the lumber for the new buildings at Fort Laramie and for the making of repairs was obtained from the sawmill which was near Laramie Peak. The lumber was hauled from there forty-five miles to Fort Laramie. Caspar went to the mill many times with his father, and upon one occasion drew a picture of the sawmill, finishing the picture in water colors.

Since the men of the Ohio regiment were all volunteers, they represented almost every trade. There were tailors, carpenters, butchers, cabinetmakers, masons, bricklayers, plasterers, blacksmiths, shoemakers, saddlers and almost every kind of mechanic. All of them used their skill in helping whenever possible. They were intelligent men and, after five days of drill in the week, attended the night schools for officers and men each evening. They also took great interest in target shooting, and the men selected for the artillery company mentioned in Colonel Collins' report soon reached a high degree of excellence. Caspar Collins was one of the instructors in this work after he had been mustered into the service.

Instruments for bands were purchased, and instructors were hired by the Government and proved very popular with the

CATHERINE WEVER COLLINS

Mother of Caspar Collins

(By permission of Ansel Watrous)

men. Even a theater was improvised for winter night entertainment. Although pantomime was most cultivated, some of the men took leading parts in standard dramas and seemed at home behind the footlights.

CHAPTER V

MOVING THE MAIL ROUTE

BECAUSE the hundreds of Indians who were on the warpath had attacked and robbed emigrant trains and mail stations and had murdered miners and travelers, the Postmaster-General on July 11, 1862, ordered the Overland Mail Company to abandon the North Platte and Sweetwater part of the route through Nebraska and Idaho Territories (now Wyoming) and to remove their stations and stock to a southern route running from Julesburg to Denver, north to Big Thompson, La Porte, Virginia Dale, Camp Walbach and Big Laramie, across the Laramie Plains to Cooper Creek, due west across the southern part of what is now Wyoming, past Medicine Bow, Fort Halleck, Elk Mountain, Sulphur Springs, Bridger's Pass, Laclede (head of Bitter Creek), Rock Springs, Green River and Fort Bridger to Bear River (Evanston) and through Echo Cañon to Salt Lake or to Fort Hall to join the old trail. It was thought that this change would take the stage line out of the very hostile and dangerous northern territory.

The transfer was made immediately after the arrival of the Ohio troops at South Pass, and not one mail was missed or delayed. Company A,[1] Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, under

[1] Extract from a letter written to John C. Friend by J. J. Hollingsworth: "I was with the first company, A, to reach the site upon which Fort Halleck at the base of Elk Mountain was built. My company, when came the order to abandon the old Government overland route via Fort Laramie, North Platte, Sweetwater Bridge and South Pass, was stationed in squads

Major O'Farrell, escorted the stage property directly south from the Sweetwater to the new locations. After performing the escort duty, this company selected a site and constructed on the stage route the buildings of Fort Halleck, which became a very important post in southern Wyoming.

For some years this post was garrisoned by Ohio troops, but

at Sweetwater Bridge, Split Rock, Three Crossings and South Pass. We guarded the stages as the transfer was being made to the southern route via Latham or Lathrop, Cache La Poudre, Virginia Dale, Fort Halleck, and Bridger's Pass. The day we reached the Fort Halleck site in July, 1862, we were met by General Mitchell or Curtiss, I forget which, with his staff and an escort of the Fourth Regulars under command of a lieutenant who conducted us to the place where the fort was to be built where we camped. About the same time, Company D of the Eleventh Ohio arrived, and these two companies, without any outside assistance, built the fort, consisting of quarters for two companies, officers' quarters, headquarters, commissary and quartermaster's storehouses and offices, a hospital, a bakeshop, two company stables and a sutler's storehouse, and the wall was up for the guardhouse when Company A was ordered to Fort Laramie, late in December, 1862.

"During this time there was no post surgeon, and the only medical treatment received was prescribed by Major O'Farrell of the Eleventh, who was in command and who had been a practicing physician of note until he joined the army.

"I had charge of three government six-mule teams that were sent to Denver after sash and the necessary lumber for doors and casing. What other lumber was used was sawed out at the fort by a whipsaw, usually the allotted punishment for fractious soldiers. While at Fort Halleck, three of our boys died—Hitchell, Kelly and Green.

"Company A, at the time the stage line was changed to the southern route, left the Sweetwater near Independence Rock and came through a gap in the mountains, in which it camped one night. One of the station agents had a barrel of whisky in a wagon, and some of our boys got at it and became hilarious, at which Major O'Farrell ordered the head of the barrel to be knocked in and the whisky spilled on the ground. The boys dubbed the place "Whisky Gap," and for years it was known by that name.

"In reaching Fort Halleck we passed near, if not through, what is now Rawlins, Wyoming, and forded the Platte not far from Fort Steele, by swimming our horses through the main current to an island. The wagons were ferried across on a private ferryboat not far distant.

"While at Halleck we frequently saw Slade, the desperado, who was superintendent of Ben Holliday's stage line and whose headquarters were at Virginia Dale. Larry Hays, who used to run the R. R. Hotel at Rawlins, was a stage driver at the time, with Fort Halleck as one end of his route.

"While we were at Halleck surveyors of the then proposed Union Pacific Railroad were working in the neighborhood; for them we furnished escorts until they had passed beyond our jurisdiction."

it was abandoned in 1866 by an official order which also located Fort Sanders about three miles south of the present site of Laramie, Wyoming.[1]

The Ohio regiment was never assembled at one place during its mountain service. The companies of the First Battalion were scattered over an area extending nearly six hundred miles east and west and three hundred miles north and south. No other troops were stationed in that territory after the arrival of the Ohio troops, except a few regulars at Fort Laramie and a company of Kansas volunteers at Fort Halleck, until the spring of 1865, when large bodies of troops began to be sent in from the East.

The number of posts and stations regularly garrisoned was from fifteen to twenty, all of which were built by the soldiers of the Ohio cavalry, except Fort Laramie. This fort had, however, become dilapidated, and important additions of new buildings and repairs of old ones were made, adding greatly to the value of the place.[2]

The groups of Ohio troopers were stationed as far west as Pacific Springs, the territory beyond that to the west being under the supervision of General Connor, of the District of Utah. The stage stations which they protected were built about ten miles apart, and at intervals of fifty miles there were "home" stations where the drivers changed and made their homes. These stations were also eating-places for the passengers. At the intermediate "swing" stations only the horses were changed, each of these places being taken care of by two men. The express wagons, coaches and rolling stock were manufactured chiefly by the famous Concord Coach Manufacturing Company of Concord, New Hampshire, and the harness was made by the Hill Harness Company of the same city.

[1] Fort Laramie and Laramie are not the same, the latter being many miles to the south of the former.

[2] *See* Appendix.

For a time, just after the troops arrived in the West, there was peace; but gradually they began to have skirmishes with prowling bands of Indians, and occasionally men were killed. The most serious troubles during the fall of 1862 were the fights at Independence Rock, Split Rock and Three Crossings of the Sweetwater.

On the night of November 24, Upper Crossing was attacked by several hundred Indians. One soldier was killed, and three Indians. In response to telegraph dispatches, Sergeant Pettijohn, of Company B, with six men, left Sweetwater Bridge immediately for Three Crossings; Lieutenant Glenn left the same place the next morning with fifteen men; and Captain van Winkle left Platte Bridge on the morning of the twenty-fifth with sixteen men.

After reconnoitering, the soldiers decided that the raiding party had been Snake Indians on a stealing expedition. Investigation proved that no guard was out at Upper Crossing the night of the attack, the alarm having been given by dogs. P. W. Johnston, telegraph operator, and Joseph Good, a member of Company B, who went to see the cause of the barking, climbed to the top of a haystack inside the pickets. When Good saw the Indians outside, he fired a squirrel rifle at them, probably wounding or killing an Indian, and they shot back and killed him with an arrow. The next morning eight Indians appeared just out of range of the guard and, after firing, left. It was later discovered that the savages had loosened several posts of the corral with a lever and would soon have had the posts out and the horses stolen if the dogs had not sounded the alarm.

One of the largest and most terrific fights in the winter of 1862–3 was that of Colonel Connor with the Shoshones on Bear River. During this battle in the snow and in freezing weather, about 250 Indians were killed, 175 horses were cap-

tured, and a quantity of arms, seventy-five lodges and a large quantity of wheat which the Indians had received from the Mormons were destroyed.

The severity of the weather which the western soldiers had to endure in the winter was almost unbelievable. Each winter some men were frozen to death, many lost their feet or hands, and a number were more or less temporarily disabled from frost while in discharge of duty.

On the third, fourth and fifth of January, 1863, the mercury froze each night—the first night for four hours, the second for fifteen hours, and the third for twelve hours. A spirit thermometer would probably have indicated from fifty to sixty degrees below zero. On one of these mornings an experiment was made with the sanitary whisky, and on exposure in a tin cup it froze solid in twenty minutes; it was tossed about like a brickbat. Stock, especially cattle and mules, often froze to death. Of course there were warm sunny days, and the weather was not all so severe.

On February 23, 1863, word was received at Fort Laramie that the Utes were stealing the horses along the stage line. Forty-three enlisted men of Company C, First Independent Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, under the command of First Lieutenant Thomas P. Clarke and Second Lieutenant John G. Reeves, left Fort Laramie for the relief of Fort Halleck. Colonel Collins followed the next morning with five men of Company A and Sergeant Apt of Company D, overtaking the party the next day. It was extremely cold, and there was snow in the mountains.

The party encamped at Rock Creek the night of the twenty-seventh. The next day, after they had left camp, came a terrific storm which lasted all day and into the night. The air was so filled with snow that it was often impossible to see ten yards in any direction. Impassable drifts obstructed the way, and any

track was obliterated in a few minutes. About thirty of the men pushed on toward the fort; ten others, who were benumbed, begged so to stop that the colonel stopped with them while they tried to build a fire. But it was impossible to kindle it, on account of the violence of the wind, and after a delay of half an hour the march was renewed. About two miles from the fort, Frank W. Courtright, of Company C, fell from his horse, too benumbed to sit in the saddle. The rest of the party pushed on to the fort to save themselves and to get help. Private David Hancher, of Company C, and Colonel Collins remained with Courtright and with Private Joseph Hudnell, who was failing very fast. The colonel finally determined to push forward and save Hudnell if possible, and to send back help for Courtright, which he succeeded in doing. But Courtright died about fifteen minutes after he was taken into the fort. Hudnell, although badly frostbitten, recovered. Upon examination, it was found that Colonel Collins from his waist down was paralyzed by the cold. Doctor Holaday, at the fort, told him that in half an hour more he would have been past help. Corporal John Griffiths, of Company C, who was in the first party to reach the fort, died shortly after they had brought him in. The sutler-store was turned into a hospital. Mr. Jones, Mr. Mills and others connected with the sutler establishment were especially active in taking care of the men.

The men of the rear guard in the wagon train suffered terribly but did not perish, for they corralled their wagons and used the blankets and provisions. The wagons were literally snowed up. After the storm subsided, the men came into the fort with the mules and horses, but left the wagons.

In writing of this experience, Colonel Collins said:

"How poorly prepared they were for that emergency! The little caps, the open-seated saddles which were cool and pleasant for man and horse in warm weather, were of no comfort

or use as the wind swept in, chilling the base of the body. One of the caps flew into the air. It had about as much warmth as a bit of dried gourd-shell. A pocket handkerchief was brought out, but benumbed fingers could not manage it, and while they were fumbling with it, it was whisked away and followed the cap. Dismounting, the soldier took off the saddle blanket and attempted to wrap it around his head, but the gale pulled it straight out and it went flying to the skies and was seen no more. From that time until the fort was reached, he had no protection for his head."

This was one of the worst blizzards ever experienced by the Ohio troopers.

On April 3, 1863, a band of Indians, after making a furious assault at Sweetwater Station, were driven off by the twenty-six men of the Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry who were there at the time. One soldier was seriously wounded and some wagon harness was destroyed.

By the middle of April the situation was so serious that General Connor telegraphed to Major General Halleck asking that more troops be sent at once. As a result of this request four companies of the Colorado Cavalry under Major Wynkoop were ordered to come into Wyoming. But these troops were unmounted and poorly equipped. While they were being made ready for service, the Southern Utes attacked the overland stage road on the Laramie Plains. Also, on July 5, they attacked the stage company's station at Cooper Creek; after running off all the stock, they proceeded to Medicine Bow station, where they carried off all the provisions and stripped the station-keepers.

At once seventy-five men were sent out from Fort Halleck. They succeeded in killing a number of Indians, but Lieutenant Hugh H. Williams was mortally wounded. On July 10, the Indians ran off 250 head of horses near Fort Laramie, and a

little later stole 211 head of horses belonging to Reshaw, owner of the toll bridge.

The soldiers at Fort Halleck did splendid work, but the situation along the line was such that women and children were afraid to cross the overland route; miners prospecting for gold on the head of Cooper Creek, Dutton Creek and Rock Creek were driven out; stage drivers were murdered and property was stolen and destroyed.

Philip Mandel and his men, who were cutting hay in the Little Laramie River valley under contract for the stage line, had numerous encounters with the savages that season.

On July 9, that part of the Territory of Idaho formerly belonging to the Territory of Nebraska was transferred to the military district of Colorado, thus bringing Wyoming under the command of Colonel John M. Chivington.

CHAPTER VI

RECRUITING MORE TROOPS

In the summer of 1863, Colonel Collins, accompanied by Caspar, returned to Ohio to recruit more men. A battalion of four companies (E, F, G and H) was organized at Camps Denison and Chase, Ohio, from June 26 to July 31, 1863, and the two battalions were consolidated, being designated the "Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry."

Caspar Collins enlisted and was commissioned as Second Lieutenant on June 30, 1863, becoming a member of Company G, Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, when it was mustered in on July 20. From the time Caspar Collins left Ohio with his father in 1861 he was employed as clerk, engineer and draughtsman without compensation, and drew most of the maps of the forts which were under his father's command. He also mapped many reconnaissance tours which his father made. His maps were used officially by the War Department. After he was mustered into service, however, he returned to the West and was placed in command of the four upper posts on the telegraph line—Sweetwater Bridge, Three Crossings, Rocky Ridge and Upper Crossings—where he did excellent work as a soldier.

The Second Battalion, which Colonel Collins organized, was called into service during John Morgan's raid through Ohio. After the capture and dispersion of Morgan's force, the battalion returned to Camp Denison, Ohio.

Leaving Camp Denison on August 1, 1863, this battalion proceeded to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, reaching there twelve days later. While the men were waiting for supplies, the town of Lawrence, Kansas, was sacked and burned and the Ohio troops were sent in pursuit of Quantrill, who had led the raid. After marching about 150 miles, the Ohioans were recalled to continue the march westward. On September 2 they started across the plains for Fort Laramie, where they arrived on October 10.

About five hundred men were in the Second Battalion, and with the other men sent out later the number reached almost one thousand. Many of these straggling recruits, who were sent out without officers, were snatched up by officers in Missouri and Kansas who needed recruits, and were attached to companies there, never reaching Wyoming.

On account of the long distance between their homes and their posts, these soldiers in the West, who were all Ohio men with the exception of about sixty, did not hear from home except at long intervals and were never granted furloughs. They were kept constantly on the alert for surprise attacks and were ready for labor and exposure at any minute. Many of them froze to death or were maimed for life through the freezing of some members. Their military life was far from easy.

After having the experiences of 1862, they were familiar with the country and should have had power to do as they thought best in handling the situation, but instead they were kept down by higher authority in the East and could not use their own judgment. During the whole period of this western military service, some of the greatest disasters arose through the orders of superior officers a thousand miles away.

Being so far away and out of sight, these men were neglected. No special notice was ever taken of the peculiar hardships or service, and no promotions were ever made for partic-

ular men, although recommended by Colonel Collins. Regular appointments were late and sometimes even omitted, probably because Washington failed to receive the necessary information as to vacancies, and the pay was often months behind. For instance, when Lieutenant Collins was killed, he owed W. G. Bullock more than $1,480, not having received his pay for nine months, and having been compelled to borrow the money.

Although the regiment was raised to full strength, no colonel was appointed, and it was mustered out with only a lieutenant-colonel in command. Many of the men who remained behind at Fort Laramie, intending to settle in the West when the rest of the troops returned to Ohio, were held for a long time waiting to be discharged for no apparent reason other than the delay caused by the long distance from the East to the West.

CHAPTER VII

MOTHER COLLINS IN THE WEST

CATHERINE WILLIS WEVER COLLINS, the mother of Caspar, was the third child of Colonel Caspar Wever of Virginia, and Jane Catherine Dunlop Wever. She was born October 30, 1818, at Park Head Forge, Washington County, Maryland, and was educated at a girls' school in Baltimore and later in Ellicott's Mills. Her father was an engineer of national reputation. Although his people were of pure German ancestry, they had been American-born for three generations. Colonel Wever was superintendent of the National Road from the Ohio River to Zanesville, Ohio; while he was in charge of this work, his family lived at St. Clairsville. In 1829 he was made superintendent of construction of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and Weverton, Maryland, near Harper's Ferry was named for him. Wherever this engineer was sent, he moved his household goods and took his family with him, and, as his daughter laughingly said, "We lived and laughed and grew along the way."

As Catherine Wever grew to young womanhood she trained her mind through study and reading, so that in later years she was prepared to administer her home in a beautiful and efficient manner. When she was a girl she took painting lessons of some of the best artists in Maryland, and she also used her pen a great deal. She instructed her children in the art of painting.

In the early forties, Catherine Wever went to Hillsboro,

Ohio, to visit her sister, who was the wife of Dr. C. C. Sams. While visiting there she met the young lawyer, Collins. They were married on November 8, 1843, at Weverton, Maryland, and journeyed by rail and river to Pittsburgh and thence by water to Cincinnati and by stage coach on to Hillsboro.

At the time of the marriage of Mr. and Mrs. Collins, there was no house on the tract of land which they purchased, adjoining the northern part of Hillsboro and now called North High Street; at that time it reached to the forest. They at once started to build a stately Colonial dwelling which is now one of the historic homes of Hillsboro.

On September 30, 1844, their only son, Caspar Wever, was born. Later, two daughters, Mary and Josephine, were born. Mary died at the age of six years. Josephine grew to a splendid and helpful womanhood, being an ideal daughter all her life. She was an invalid for many years and suffered a great deal, but was always cheerful, with a calm acceptance of her illness, and made no complaint. She passed away in August, 1916.

In 1845 the Collins family moved into the new home. During the spring and summer they lived in the workmen's cottage on the grounds, as Mrs. Collins insisted that it was more convenient to watch and to direct the building from that location. The new house and its surroundings were named "Dogwood Knob." When settled, the family kept open house with the lavish hospitality characteristic of the period.

The mother and children loved the home which the father had built for them and took great pride in the snowy dogwood trees and the old-fashioned flower garden. Mrs. Collins was a student of nature and was most skillful in beautifying the grounds. Under her direction fruit trees—including apples, plums, peaches and quinces—were planted on the fertile rolling slope which stretched back toward the forest from the house.

When the Civil War broke out, Mrs. Collins and her sister became active members in the Sanitary Committee of the Civil War, which corresponded to the present day Red Cross organization. She was always a devoted worker in the missionary cause, was a teacher in the Sunday School, and belonged to literary clubs; she was a member of Sara L. Richards Altruistic Association and a member of St. Mary's Parish. But she placed her war work above everything else, and gave encouragement and enthusiasm to her husband in his efforts to raise the volunteer cavalry regiment.

When the day came that her soldier husband and her only son rode to war, the little woman brushed away her tears and turned with zest to the work of scraping lint and making bandages which might be used to bind the very wounds of her loved ones. Her only recreation during those strenuous days was the work in her old-fashioned flower garden at the side of her home.

Mrs. Collins was a woman of such sound judgment and such capability that her husband sent for her to come to Fort Laramie in the winter of 1863. Traveling by steamboat, by railroad, by army wagon, by ambulance and by stage coach across the miles of dangers and hardships, she reached Fort Laramie on November 14.

She became a favorite in the post and was the recipient of many gifts. In March, 1864, Colonel Collins received a letter from Deer Creek from Major Thomas S. Fariss saying that he had advised John Richard, Jr., and Joseph Bessoinette, Jr., half-breed sons of old mountaineers, each to make up a pack of the best buffalo robes that could be selected as a present to Mrs. Collins, and he requested that she accept them without hesitation.

Mrs. Collins remained on the frontier almost a year with her husband and son. Finally, when the conditions became so

unsettled and the Indian hostilities became so numerous, Colonel Collins thought it advisable that she return to her home in Ohio. Part of the long, lonesome and dangerous trip back was made in the care of Caspar and for a short distance under escort of General Mitchell and his staff. Sometimes, however, she was in the care of a noncommissioned officer, a private or a teamster. But the return trip was made in safety, the Indians letting her party journey on unmolested.

Mrs. Collins lived to the age of 93, in her home at Hillsboro, dying in December, 1911.

CHAPTER VIII

DAYS OF '64

On New Year's Day, 1864, Lieutenant Glenn and Lieutenant Talpey, of Company C, started from Fort Laramie with a train and a beef herd for the relief of Fort Halleck. They were forced to return, since they could not get through Sibylle Cañon on account of the snow. The first night they were out, the thermometer registered twenty-nine degrees below zero; it was eighteen degrees below on the morning of their return to Fort Laramie. Such experiences were common.

The troubles in 1864 began with slight depredations but soon grew into large proportions. Many parties of emigrants were murdered and their wagons plundered. Often these tragedies might have been averted if the travelers had taken more care; but because they had traveled several hundreds of miles unmolested, they became careless and bold, not realizing that a lurking band of Indians had been trailing them for days, waiting for an opportunity to catch them off their guard.

In January, 1864, six companies of the Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry had headquarters at Fort Laramie, and Companies C and F were at Fort Halleck under Captain Mackey. At that time Colonel Collins was still in command at Fort Laramie. In addition to his regular military work, he did some valuable work for the Smithsonian Institution. A letter from that institution dated November 30, 1863, asked him to collect eggs of birds inhabiting Laramie Peak and the region

west of it, eggs of the prairie-dog owl, buffalo hides, buffalo skulls, winter specimens and skins of grouse, sage cocks and blue grouse, and also to collect fossils. In this work Casper took a great delight; he aided his father materially in the collection of specimens, especially of rabbits and grouse. The colonel also kept a meteorological register.

So excellent was this work that it attracted the attention of many persons in Washington. In March, 1864, John Hitz, Jr., Acting Consul-General of Switzerland, wrote a letter to Colonel Collins introducing Captain Alfred de Wattewyl of the Swiss army and asking that he be permitted to join the regiment that he might gain knowledge of the West for his country and might pursue the collection of specimens. Captain de Wattewyl was accompanied by Dr. Rudolf B. Hitz, sent by the Smithsonian Institution.

Anticipating a rush of gold-seekers that spring, Major General Curtis made requisition for mountain howitzers to be used in strengthening posts and to save men on the stage route so that more troops could be used on escort duty. The nearest point of supplies was then in Iowa.

But the necessity of more men as well as more howitzers was keenly realized by Colonel Collins, who made an appeal to General Mitchell on April 25 for authority to send out larger military escorts and to have more troops ready for duty. But this appeal was answered by General Mitchell through General Curtis, who said that the immigration was large enough to defend itself and that the army was in sad need of troops and could not get them. That same day certain ammunition was seized and Indian traders were arrested at Fort Laramie, with the result that the general directed that trading with the warlike Indians be stopped.

Among those who were preparing for the gold rush was Major Bridger, who was at Fort Laramie in April, organizing

a train to open up a new route to the gold fields in the Big Horn Mountains. Very often he discussed the situation with Colonel Collins, and they both realized that the troops were facing a tremendous proposition.

By the last of July, Colonel Collins' troops were scattered over five hundred miles of country through Wyoming, with three companies on the Denver line from Julesburg to Frémont's Orchard.

On July 28 the colonel was relieved from the command of the post at Fort Laramie and given general supervision of all posts and detachments west of Julesburg in the District of Nebraska, including both lines of communication westward. He also received entire authority to make necessary changes in order to protect the lines. He was relieved at Laramie by Major John S. Wood, Seventh Iowa Cavalry Volunteers, with D and F companies of his regiment as part of the garrison.

Hundreds of weary miles were traveled by the colonel as he went from post to post reorganizing, inspecting and planning. One of the first important changes that he considered was in Colorado. On account of the importance of having a permanent post on the Cache la Poudre River near its outlet from the mountains and in the vicinity of the junction of the mail line from Denver and the Overland Mail route, he issued an order changing the location of Camp Collins from the vicinity of La Porte to the present site of Fort Collins.[1] This change would also make a line of defense between the Utes, Arapahoes and Cheyennes.

By the fall of 1864, the Indians had destroyed telegraph lines, had captured wagon trains, had burned ranch homes, and had murdered children, women and men so indiscriminately that not a wagon train nor a coach of any kind dared cross the plains without being under heavy guard. General Halleck re-

[1] *See* Appendix.

quested General Connor to send troops from Fort Douglas to assist along the Overland Mail route in view of these depredations. At first General Connor hesitated to do this, since the men would not be under his command, but later he sent two hundred soldiers into General Halleck's district, where the Ohio troops were then on duty.

One of the great handicaps in fighting the Indians was the delay caused by military red tape. Prowling bands of Indians would cross from one military district to another, and the matter of who should pursue the marauders often caused so much delay that the Indians went unpunished.

An end to the raids of 1864 came, however, with the battle of Sand Creek on November 29. Colonel John M. Chivington, commander of the District of Colorado, led the expedition and slaughtered many Indians, destroying an entire Cheyenne village. There were those who disagreed with Chivington's methods and were aroused over this wholesale killing, but it was his method of terrorizing and subduing the enemy.

In addition to the many duties which had fallen to the lot of the western troops at that time, they were asked to give protection to the engineers who were surveying the route for the transcontinental railroad. Each surveying party received a military escort of from ten to twenty men. General Grenville M. Dodge, in speaking of this work, said: "The duty of the escort was to protect the party when in camp; in the field the escort usually occupied prominent hills commanding the territory in which the work was to be done, so as to head off sudden attacks."

CHAPTER IX

THE FIGHT AT MUD SPRINGS

For some time Colonel Collins had been urging the War Department to relieve the First Battalion, Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, as the time of service had expired. After a long delay, the first step in this direction was taken on January 2, 1865, when Company B was relieved from duty at Fort Collins and sent to Fort Laramie. Although for a short time the men thought that their fighting days were at an end and that they would soon reach home, they found that strenuous days were still ahead of them.

On Saturday, February 4, 1865, Colonel Collins received a telegram that Mud Springs, a telegraph station 105 miles east of Fort Laramie, was attacked by Indians. At that time there were nine soldiers and five citizens at Mud Springs.[1] Immediately, Colonel Collins ordered Lieutenant Ellsworth, Commanding Company H, Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, then at Camp Mitchell,[2] to proceed without delay to Mud Springs, forty-five miles from there, with all the men he could spare. Lieutenant Ellsworth obeyed promptly and, after

[1] Mud Springs Station. North of the Telegraph and Emigrant Overland route and west of Mud Springs. Telegraph office 20 x 16, squad room 15 x 16, stable 40 x 20, shed.

[2] Camp Mitchell, Nebraska. Siuth of Platte River and north of road. Corral 30 x 166, officers' stable 22 x 43, company stable 22 x 117, squad room 16 x 32, kitchen and mess room 16 x 28, quartermaster's room 15 x 16, laundry 16 x 18, commissary 16 x 16, orderly's room 16 x 16, officers' room 16 x 16, officers' kitchen 12 x 16, room 12 x 16, guard room 12 x 16, sentinel's box, parade ground 66 x 164.

marching all night, reached the station at daybreak, the morning of the fight, with thirty-six men.

Colonel Collins with 120 men from different companies of the Eleventh Ohio and a part of Company D, Seventh Iowa Cavalry, left Fort Laramie at seven o'clock on the night of the fourth and traveled all night, reaching Camp Mitchell in the forenoon of the next day. The night was terribly cold, and several of the men were so badly frozen that they could not proceed with the command. After a short rest, Colonel Collins took twenty-five men and made a forced march to Mud Springs, reaching there about two o'clock on the morning of the sixth. The rest of the command, under Captain Fouts, Seventh Iowa Cavalry, reached Mud Springs about eight o'clock in the morning.

The Indians, who had been seen in great numbers on Pole Creek on the third of February, had stolen the stock at the station on the fourth and also the cattle herd of Creighton and Hoel on Pumpkin Creek, about four miles away from Mud Springs. The next morning after stealing the stock, the Indians surrounded Mud Springs Station and seemed surprised at the increase of men; after a little firing, their attack ceased. At daylight on the sixth, they began to come over the bluffs from all directions and commenced a desultory firing, trying to cut off some of the main body of troops then arriving at the station. They plainly intended to take the post. The odds were greatly against the soldiers, as the men and stock were fatigued by night travel and were chilled and frostbitten. The station was surrounded by hills and knolls full of gullies, enabling the Indians to ambush and creep up on the soldiers without exposing themselves to a cavalry charge.

The suddenness of the attack and the condition of the men, together with the character of the ground, interfered with proper discipline and system, and the fighting was at first mis-

cellaneous. It was common to see a soldier and an Indian playing bopeep for half an hour at a time, and the soldiers soon became adept at crawling under banks and creeping up to favorable positions to watch for an Indian's head and to shoot the moment it was shown.

About two hundred Indians crept behind a hill and, without being seen, were able to shoot arrows at an angle of forty-five degrees, wounding many horses and mules and some of the men seventy-five yards away in the post. Immediately two charging parties were sent, one on horseback and one on foot, who quickly cleared the Indians from the place. A rifle pit was dug on the highest point, and the soldiers had no more trouble from that direction.

After about four hours of fighting, the soldiers began to press back the Indians in all directions and soon drove them off. About two o'clock their fire slackened and they withdrew into the hills, many being seen during the afternoon and until dark on the bluffs.

In the course of the day seven soldiers were wounded, three seriously, and some horses and mules were killed. Most of the officers and men estimated that the Indians lost about forty men. Of course it was impossible to ascertain the number of their dead and wounded, as these were carried off immediately; according to custom, many of the warriors had tied themselves to their horses so that their bodies would be carried off in case of mischance. About five hundred to one thousand warriors, armed with rifles, revolvers and bows and arrows, were engaged in the fight. Many of the warriors were mounted on American horses. There were also white men and Mexicans with them. They had plenty of ammunition, Minié balls being common. The warriors were brave but generally shot too high to wound the soldiers.

Early in the engagement, Colonel Collins telegraphed to

Major Thomas L. Mackey, in command at Fort Laramie, to send a fieldpiece on account of the difficulty in dislodging the Indians from their sheltered positions. Soon after this the wire was cut. A strong party was sent out to repair the break, which was a mile west of the station. Later it was cut again and some poles were torn down, and the break could not be repaired until after dark.

The soldiers, who spent the night fortifying the post and preparing for the offensive, were greatly surprised in the morning to find that the Indians had moved away in the direction of the springs on Rush Creek, about ten miles distant, the country being covered with the trails which they had made.

Before daylight on the eighth, Lieutenant William H. Brown, Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, arrived with a howitzer, having made the trip from Fort Laramie, a distance of 105 miles, in thirty-four hours, including stoppages.

As soon as possible that morning, Colonel Collins organized an expedition for pursuit, leaving Captain Fouts in command of the station. The expedition moved very cautiously, having scouts out on all sides and in front to prevent a surprise attack by the Indians, whose camp was found at Rush Creek Springs. Although the camp was deserted, there were evidences that it had been left only a short time, and there were indications that the Indians had been there about three days. The camp, covering several miles, showed that they were in great numbers. More than one hundred beef cattle had been slaughtered; empty oyster, meat and fruit cans were plentiful; and flour sacks, a quantity of codfish and numerous other trophies of the raids on ranches and trains were scattered everywhere.

Pressing forward on the now fresh trails, the soldiers reached the valley of the Platte near the mouth of Rush Creek. When within about a mile of the river, they sighted the Indians on the other side, scattered over the plain between the

bluffs and the river, grazing their horses. There were no tepees or lodges; no travois or lodge poles; no women, children or dogs in sight, since they had all gone forward into the bluffs about five miles north of the river. The lodge trails were very broad and fresh, apparently having been made that morning and the previous evening.

With the aid of field glasses the officers soon discovered that they had underestimated the numbers against them, as there were at last two thousand warriors in sight. It was evident that all the hostile Indians who had been committing depredations and holding the country along the South Platte were concentrated there.

While the officers were trying to discover a crossing on the ice, the Indians began to swarm over the frozen river one or two miles above and below their position, giving the soldiers scarcely time to corral their train before they were surrounded. The men were calm and cool-headed, had confidence in their officers and went at the fight with a will. Sharpshooters were pushed forward to the hillocks, and rifle pits were dug. The Indians, who dashed up boldly, soon fell back under the heavy fire and began their old game of skulking and sharpshooting.

In order to clear out a nest of Indians behind a hill about four hundred yards away from the train, a detail of sixteen mounted men from Company D, Seventh Iowa Cavalry, and from the First Battery of the Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, under Lieutenant Patton of the Ohio regiment, made a brilliant charge with revolvers in hand and cleared out the place. When two hundred Indians who were on the rising ground beyond the hillock saw the cavalry charging, they rushed down to save their warriors, and a hand-to-hand fight followed in which Private John A. Harris, Company D, Seventh Iowa Cavalry, was killed, and Private William H. Hartshorn, Company C, Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry,

who was on a very spirited horse, charged forward and disappeared among the Indians and was seen no more alive. The body of Private Hartshorn was found the next morning, about a mile away from camp, terribly mutilated and with ninety-seven arrows in it.

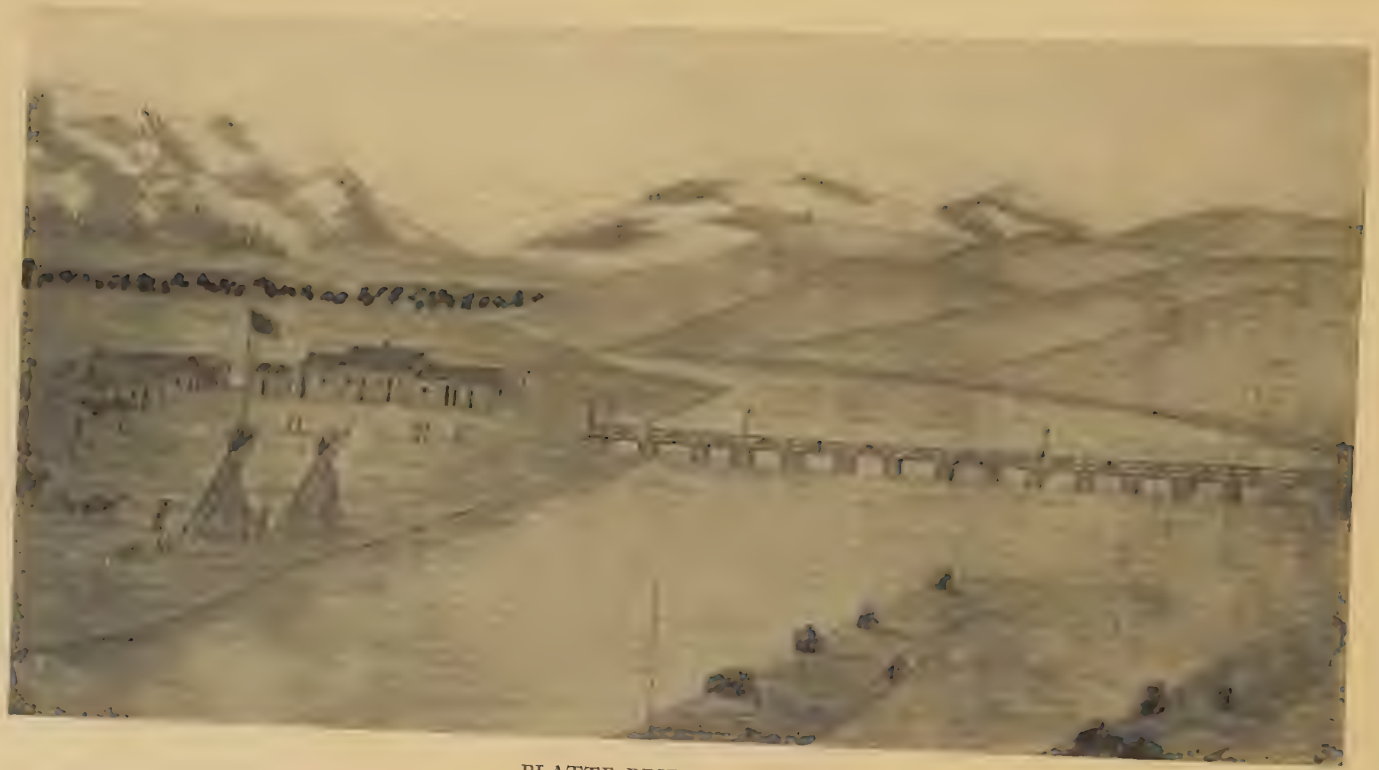
The detail as commanded retreated to the main body after clearing out the nest of Indians. Immediately a detail was sent out to get the body of Harris before the Indians had time to scalp him or to take away his clothing. Both his body and the body of Hartshorn were later taken to Fort Laramie for burial.

That evening the body of an Indian shot by Private Miller, Company C, Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, was lying on the ice about half a mile from the train. Before dark an order was issued to water the mules and horses at the creek, but one group of men by mistake started toward the river. The Indians, thinking that the soldiers were going down to get the body, flocked towards the point. "Recall" was sounded in camp and, as soon as the soldiers turned back, the Indians retired. In the morning, however, the body was gone.

Soon after daybreak about four hundred warriors crossed the river, circled the camp and, after exchanging a few shots, recrossed the river and put off rapidly for the bluffs, hurrying away into the sand hills to overtake their families who had gone on the day before.

Since the number of the Indians was so great, it was inadvisable for the troops to follow, and so they broke camp about two o'clock and moved up the Platte about fifteen miles, where the command was divided, part going to Fort Laramie under Lieutenant Brown and the rest returning to Mud Springs with Colonel Collins.

After repairing the telegraph line near Julesburg, Colonel Collins and his men started for Fort Laramie. On their way they found Pole Creek Station burned and the telegraph poles



PLATTE BRIDGE STATION

(From a drawing by Caspar Collins)

gone for ten and one-half miles between there and Mud Springs. The Indians had entirely recovered from the superstitious idea that it was "bad medicine" to touch the wires.

In an official report, Colonel Collins praised his men highly for their conduct during the Mud Springs affair. The main body of the troops had marched four hundred miles in ten days in the dead of winter, much of the time by night; they had camped on the ground, without tents, often without fire, and with only short rations. They had met and repulsed in every fight the brave and cunning foe—outnumbering the soldiers at least ten to one. And, according to the colonel, their "patience and endurance, their cheerfulness and courage could not be surpassed."

In this same report Colonel Collins predicted the battle at Platte Bridge and urged that more troops be sent west at once. He wrote:

"The party we met has no doubt gone north to the Powder River country to join the hostile Indians there and may be expected to continue their depredations along the North Platte till severely punished. Their probable route from where we left them will be through the Sand Hills to L'Eau Qui Court, then across the heads of White River and the South Fork of the Cheyenne to Powder River. They are well armed and mounted, have many rifles, muskets and plenty of ammunition, including Minié cartridges with ounce balls, are full of venom and bent on revenge for the loss of their people south. As soon as they reach the Indians north, they will excite and perhaps compel them to become hostile. The posts on the Platte, especially Deer Creek *and Platte Bridge, will be in immediate danger*. More troops should be sent out here immediately to hold the posts in the sub-district and, when spring opens, important expeditions should be organized to penetrate the center of their country.

"Having been in the service nearly three years and being about to leave it, I venture to add a word as to the policy to be pursued. I beg to repeat the suggestion, which I have heretofore made, that the permanent cure for the hostilities of the northern Indians is to go into the heart of their buffalo country and build and hold forts until the trouble is over. A hasty expedition, however successful, is only a temporary lesson."

Soon after this, on March 7, Colonel Collins was en route to Omaha to be mustered out of the service, as his term of enlistment had expired; he received his discharge papers on April 1, 1865.

While Colonel William O. Collins was on his way to be discharged, Brigadier General Robert M. Mitchell wrote from Headquarters, Expeditionary Troops, District of Nebraska, to Major General Dodge as follows:

"March 7, 1865.

"Colonel Collins is now en route to Omaha for the purpose of being mustered out, his term of service having expired . . . Colonel Collins has been in the mountain service three years. He has traversed the mountains in every direction from Laramie to South Pass for many miles and is probably as well, if not better, posted than any white man that has not made his home with the Indians. He will be able to show from maps made by himself that, to make success a certainty in a campaign against the Indians, the movement of more than one column is necessary."

Immediately after being discharged from the service, William Collins resumed the practice of law, but he did not have to depend upon his law practice for a living, as he had ample means. He had leisure for accurate study of live questions and gave much time and thought to the betterment of all classes. He was an advocate of liberal education for all children at pub-

lic expense and did all in his power for the improvement of the public schools of Ohio. As one of the founders of St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Hillsboro, Colonel Collins was an enthusiastic church worker. He was faithful to his convictions and allowed others the same privilege without question.

Colonel Collins was very systematic and carefully preserved all his letters, records and essays, as well as clippings pertaining to the Collins family, and much of the material contained in this volume has been gleaned from the papers that he preserved, from the school essays written in 1831 to letters written just before his death on October 26, 1880.

CHAPTER X

TROUBLES WITH THE INDIANS

THE situation grew more serious each day. So frequent and so strong were the attacks that all communication, both by stage line and by telegraph, was destroyed for a time. Rumors which said that the Indians were assembling on Powder River were confirmed by Mrs. Morton, who was brought to Fort Laramie from the Indians on Powder River. She had been captured the summer before on Plum Creek. She told the officers that the Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Kiowas, Brûlé and Ogalala Sioux and Minne Kongues [1] were banded together and determined to "make war to the knife."

The people in Colorado as well as in Nebraska were in a terrible state of fear, for not enough troops could be obtained to guard the lines of transportation and there were so many military districts that the transfer of troops was often delayed. General G. M. Dodge, on March 28, consolidated the districts of Utah, Colorado and Nebraska into one District of the Plains, under General P. E. Connor with headquarters at Denver.

That spring Company G, Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, was stationed at Platte Bridge, Sweetwater Bridge,[2] Three

[1] This is sometimes spelled "Minniconjou".

[2] Sweetwater Station. North of Sweetwater River and south of the Telegraph and Emigrant Overland route. It consisted of telegraph wareroom 10 x 20, telegraph office 12 x 20, parade ground 40 x 56, sentinel box 9 ft. high, squad room 10 x 18, orderly's room 10 x 10, squad room 10 x 15, doctor's room 10 x 12, commanding officer's room 10 x 12, commissary 12 x 15, telegraph station 12 x 15, sink 6 x 12, officers' stables 12 x 20, company stable 10 x 71, stable 10 x 14, stable

JOHN FRIEND

A comrade of Caspar Collins in 1863.

This photograph was made by Brown, Rawlins, Wyoming, from a tintype.

Crossings,[1] St. Mary's,[2] and South Pass,[3] a single company guarding more than 150 miles of Pacific Telegraph line. No company in the regiment was more thoroughly tried by the Indians. From March 5 to September, 1865, this company had thirteen engagements with the savages.

Caspar Collins, as well as the other officers and the men of this company, was under heavy strain and kept constantly on duty at the various stations.

February of 1865 was a most strenuous month, especially in the vicinity of Deer Creek,[4] where Caspar was stationed. Early in the month Captain L. M. Rinehart, Company G, who was under arrest awaiting sentence of court-martial, was temporarily relieved from arrest with his own consent and returned to his company to assist in repelling threatened attacks at Deer Creek and Platte Bridge. On February 13 he received word that the Indians were plundering the camp and herd of some mountaineers about twenty miles from Deer Creek. Taking ten

10 x 22, corral to stables 26 x 46, entry from parade grounds to corral, shed, corral of logs.

[1] Three Crossings Station. South of Sweetwater River and south of Telegraph and Emigrant Overland route. Parade 28 x 40, squad room 14 x 16, telegraph office and squad room 14 x 16, kitchen 14 x 18, commissary 12 x 24, corral 20 x 36, stable 16 x 60, sentinel box on roof, sink.

[2] St. Mary's, Rocky Ridge Station. Northeast of Sweetwater River and east of the creek. South of Telegraph and Emigrant Overland route. Stable 12 x 25, stable 12 x 22, hay-corral 12 x 25, corral (large), operator's room 10 x 12, telegraph office 10 x 12, telegraph warehouse room 10 x 11, squad room 11 x 12, squad room 11 x 12.

[3] South Pass Station. Northeast of Sweetwater River and southeast of Telegraph and Emigrant Overland route. Officers' quarters 12 x 15, two squad rooms 12 x 15 each, commissary with cellar 12 x 16, squad room 12 x 16, telegraph office 12 x 12, kitchen, telegraph wareroom, telegraph station, telegraph stable, corral, parade 44 x 50, officers' stable 12 x 15, stable 20 x 50.

[4] Deer Creek Station. South of Platte River; west of Deer Creek; part was north of Telegraph and Emigrant Overland route and part south of it. Northern part consisted of corral, private buildings 12 x 15, 15 x 18, 15 x 15, 15 x 20, 12 x 15. Southern part: corral 49 x 60, officers' station 7 x 15, corral, telegraph office 15 x 15, officers' room 12 x 15, orderly's room 10 x 15, squad room 12 x 15, squad room 15 x 15, commissary 10 x 15, laundry 10 x 15, stable 18 x 60, mess room 10 x 12, kitchen 10 x 12, blacksmith shop 10 x 12.

men with him, the captain rode rapidly to the spot and, upon arriving there, charged the Indians, who shot and killed him instantly. Captain Rinehart had splendid military ability and was prompt and brave. He was soldierly in bearing and very strict in command, but was genial and kind in manner. He was a general favorite and excelled as an officer in his regiment. His remains were later taken back to Springfield, Ohio, for interment.

After the death of Captain Rinehart, Caspar Collins was placed in command of Company G, and on May 1 was promoted to the rank of first lieutenant; but the records show that he was not mustered to that position, probably on account of delay in sending orders.

In letters written to his mother and aunt in April, Caspar gave vivid descriptions of incidents in his daily life and spoke of having received the news of the surrender of Lee and of the assassination of President Lincoln.

CHAPTER XI

GATHERING OF THE TRIBES

EARLY in the spring of 1865 the northern Cheyennes and Ogalala Sioux under Old Man Afraid of His Horses were camped on Powder River, and in March the southern Cheyennes joined them, making a separate camp. The southern Cheyennes, having heard of the slaughter at Sand Creek at which Chivington had destroyed a Cheyenne village and killed old men, women and children, were eager to get into battle with the white men.

After daily feasts and resting, they moved their village down the stream to a fresh camp consisting of little clusters of tepees which extended along the stream for two miles or more. They also built log corrals, since they contemplated staying there for some time.

In May these Indians moved their camp from Powder River over to the Tongue River and soon held a big war council at the foot of the Big Horn Mountains. They decided that, as soon as their horses were strong enough to travel long distances, their war parties should set out to raid the emigrant roads on the North and South Platte, making a general attack at their objective point on the road near Platte Bridge.

At that time Colonel Moonlight, Eleventh Kansas Cavalry, who had been made commander at Fort Laramie, organized an expedition and, with five hundred cavalry, composed of men of the Eleventh Ohio, Seventh Iowa, and Eleventh Kansas

regiments, left on May 3 for the Wind River valley, where three hundred Cheyenne lodges were reported to be established. Scouts were sent out in all directions, Jim Bridger being the guide for the expedition. But they found that the Indians, as has been stated, had scattered, going as far south as the Sweetwater mountains, and then had turned north to the Powder River country. After covering about 459 miles, the expedition returned to Fort Laramie by way of Platte Bridge, having accomplished nothing.

Later in the month there was quite a sensation at Fort Laramie when two Indian chiefs, Two Face and Black Foot, were captured and hanged. There was much discussion at the time concerning the affair; but Colonel Moonlight felt justified in taking such a stringent and hurried step after hearing the pitiful tales of Mrs. Eubanks, who, with her little daughter, had been captured by the Cheyennes on Little Blue Creek the fall before, when the red men had murdered her husband and several others. Her stories of the brutality of the Indians and of her being sold by the Cheyennes to Two Face and Black Foot so incensed the colonel that he ordered the Indians hanged at once.

Early in May, General Connor moved his headquarters from Denver to Julesburg and reorganized a system of protection by directing Colonel Moonlight to distribute two companies of the Third United States Volunteers along the North Platte and Sweetwater Rivers to South Pass. One of these companies had headquarters at Three Crossings, and the commanding officer was directed to detail one or two noncommissioned officers and twelve men for each of the following telegraph stations: South Pass, St. Mary's and Sweetwater. The headquarters of the other company was Camp Marshall,[1] with

[1] Camp Marshall or La Bonte Station. Northwest of La Bonte Creek and on northeast side of Telegraph and Emigrant Overland route. This station was built in the form of a square with a large stable (15 x 100) on the east side,

similar details posted at Horse Shoe,[1] Deer Creek and Platte Bridge. A squadron of cavalry was ordered to the line, and four troopers were detailed at each station to assist the telegraph operators.

The following report of the quartermaster's supplies for a trip taken from Fort Laramie to Platte Bridge is typical of conditions at that time and shows the hardships which the men had to endure:

"Each man had only one wool blanket, one gum blanket and an overcoat. It snowed and there was no wood for a fire but scant sagebrush, which was a stubborn proposition if one tried to make it burn. The horses were in woeful condition, having had no corn for a month.

While the officers and men were preparing for attacks, the northern Cheyennes, upon leaving their winter camp, led a party consisting of northern and southern Cheyennes and a number of Sioux warriors under Young Man Afraid of His Horses (meaning "They fear even his horses"), and headed for a point on the North Platte River about thirty miles below Platte Bridge.

On May 20 a party of two hundred Indians from these bands attacked Deer Creek and succeeded in running off twenty-six horses and in killing one soldier, a member of Colonel Plumb's command. From Deer Creek the Indians continued along the Overland route, committing numerous depredations.

Seven days later Lieutenant Collins with two men started

officers' stable (12 x 20) on the south, two squad rooms 12 x 45 each, corral 30 x 76, commissary 12 x 13, kitchen 12 x 13, mess room 12 x 33, orderly room 144 feet square, entry 10 feet wide, officers' room 144 feet square, officers' kitchen 12 x 10, officers' mess room 10 x 12, telegraph office 12 x 15, telegraph wareroom, forage room 144 feet square, laundry room 11 x 13.

[1] Horse Shoe Station. South of Horse Shoe Creek and the Telegraph and Emigrant Overland route. Telegraph office 16 x 30, parade 30 x 40, squad room 13 x 24, kitchen 13 x 24, laundry 12 x 24, officers' quarters 12 x 24, well, corral 40 x 74, stable 22 x 60, corral 78 x 80, well.

from Three Crossings for Saint Mary's (Rocky Ridge). Before they reached there they could see the buildings on fire and knew that the Indians were there. So they proceeded immediately to Sweetwater, where they later learned that about 150 Indians had attacked St. Mary's station and in a short time had set fire to the buildings. The garrison of five men, all of Company G, Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, escaped to an old well near the quarters, where they stayed until the next night; they then escaped to South Pass. A box of metallic cartridges began to explode in the station when the fire reached it; this helped to frighten away the Indians. When the soldiers fled from the station, one of the men, Private Chavil St. Clair, took a relay sounder and a coil of fine wire and was able to communicate with South Pass, telling of the situation. The men lost everything except their firearms and the clothes they wore. The Indians captured one horse, but the men shot the other one to prevent it from falling into the hands of the enemy. After cutting about four hundred yards of telegraph wire and burning the poles, the Indians went south up the Sage Creek valley.

According to a report made by Captain Bretney, the Indians attempted to take the herd at Sweetwater Station on May 26 but were repulsed, one Indian being killed and one pony injured. Two days later about twenty-five of the enemy made another attempt and succeeded in getting four horses and two mules. One Indian was wounded in this skirmish. After cutting the telegraph wire about one thousand yards east of the quarters and carrying off one hundred yards of wire, the red men left the station.

In addition to having to protect the telegraph line, the soldiers were called upon to escort many emigrant trains on the northern overland route as well as on the southern trail, as the

travelers still preferred the northern route to the one across the Laramie Plains because it was shorter.

On June 3, six Indians appeared on the bank of the Platte River opposite Platte Bridge station, evidently trying to draw out the soldiers. Sergeant White at the station dispatched a messenger immediately to Colonel Plumb at Camp Dodge.[1] The colonel, with ten men of Company G, Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, and men of the Kansas cavalry, took part in the fight which followed. The colonel, with the Ohio men, chased the Indians for about five miles, keeping within shooting distance. It was a running fight. Suddenly the Indians wheeled, and about sixty of them dashed down Dry Creek and as suddenly wheeled again when they saw relief parties coming up. Six or seven men of Companies A and F of the Kansas regiment and one man of Company G of the Ohio regiment pursued the Indians to the left, but some of their horses were shot under them. William T. Bonwell, Company F, Eleventh Kansas Cavalry, and Tilman Stahlnecker, Company G, Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, were killed. The horses ridden by the soldiers were not in good condition and could not keep up with the sleek, wiry ponies of the savages.

The troubles on the southern route were just as numerous as those to the north. Lieutenant J. A. Brown, Company K, Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, left Fort Halleck, Dakota Territory, on June 2, with thirty-five men of his company, to reopen the mail route between there and Fort Bridger. That night they reached the North Platte River, where they camped, crossing the next morning and going west to Sage Creek Station, which they found deserted. Four miles beyond the station they found two emigrants killed. The next two stations, Pine Grove

[1] Camp Dodge, often confused with Platte Bridge, was six miles from the bridge, but was in plain view from it.

and Bridger's Pass, were also deserted. At the fourth station, Sulphur Spring, the soldiers found the stock tenders and drivers from the other stations assembled with the stock belonging to Sage Creek and Pine Grove, and so they did not go on to Washakie, the next station west. The stage men soon returned to their stations; but on June 8, one hundred Indians again attacked Sage Creek Station and, after a fierce fight, drove the men out. All except two of the men were killed and the station was burned.

Such depredations and fights occurred daily during the summer, and the troops were desperate in their appeal for reenforcements.

CHAPTER XII

PLATTE BRIDGE AND THE PLATTE BRIDGE FIGHT

PLATTE BRIDGE

Platte Bridge had been selected by the Indians as their objective for a concentrated attack because it controlled one of the most important crossings of the North Platte River on the Telegraph and Emigrant Overland route.

In 1847 the Mormons established a ferry there for their own convenience and used it a great deal on account of the exorbitant prices which Reshaw, the toll bridge owner, charged to cross the river on his bridge seven miles below. But there was always difficulty in locating the ferry boat.

In the early fifties Louis Ganard built a toll bridge across the Sweetwater below Independence Rock and was assisted in running it by his wife, who was a Shoshone squaw, and his two halfbreed nephews. Later, appreciating the importance of the crossing on the North Platte at the Mormon ferry, Ganard decided to move to that location. In 1859 he built of cedar logs a thousand-foot span bridge about thirteen feet wide, resting on cribs filled with stone. This structure cost about $60,000 and was the most notable one of its kind west of the Missouri River. It was named Platte Bridge.[1]

Although troops occupied the station near the bridge in

[1] Nothing now remains of the bridge except some base blocks which can only be distinguished in low water.

1858, the place was abandoned in April, 1859, by an order of the War Department issued on March 23, 1859, and no more troops were sent there until May, 1862.

At that time Platte Bridge station, located on the south bank of the Platte River and east and southeast of the Telegraph and Emigrant Overland route, consisted of a stockade fourteen feet high, built of pine logs about a foot in diameter. The outside walls projected four feet above the roof, and this projection, or breastwork as it was called, was provided with loopholes for musketry. All the doors and windows faced inside on the courtyard, the entrance to which was defended by two heavy gates. The stockade was about fifty rods southeast of the bridge. A half-mile west of the bridge, on the north side of the river, there was a growth of willows which formed a screen; a half-mile east, on the north side of the river, there was a deep gulch to the river.

Early in 1865, upon the recommendation of Colonel Collins, Platte Bridge was changed from a small and occasional troop station to a permanent post made up of two stores, each a hundred feet square. East of the store was a blacksmith shop 10 x 15 with an adjoining corral built of pine logs about a foot in diameter, securely pinned together, set on end, three feet in the ground and projecting upward ten feet. Southwest of the store were: stable 15 x 60, corral 45 x 48, officers' room 10 x 12, officers' room 14 feet square, laundry 10 x 12, private room 12 x 13. North of these there was a commissary 14 feet square. North of this were: squad room 13 x 15, kitchen 13 x 19, squad room 13 x 19, storeroom 13 x 19, room 12 x 11, telegraph office 9 x 11, telegraph wareroom. The flagstaff was east of the telegraph office. In order to reach the quarters it was necessary to pass through the corral, the entrance to which was closed by a heavy gate.

When General Dodge created the District of the Plains,

PLATTE BRIDGE

Platte Bridge was made one of the most important posts on the Overland route. According to Colonel Collins, the post at the time of the attack was perfectly "defensible and with the howitzer could have been held by twenty men."

THE FIGHT

Gradually from all directions, as they had planned, the Indians assembled on the hills north of the Platte River in the neighborhood of the bridge. By this time the party had increased in size to approximately three thousand. Three tribes were represented: Sioux, Cheyennes and Arapahoes. About two hundred of the Indians were women, chiefly Cheyennes.

According to the stories told by the Indians, they decided to attack Platte Bridge and sent a small party to the fort to attract the attention of the soldiers in an effort to induce them to come out in pursuit. After these decoys were sent out, the main body of Indians went to the bluffs overlooking the river bottom and the fort. The Crazy Dogs marched on the flanks and the Dog Soldiers brought up the rear, making a compact formation. They moved very slowly in order not to cause a cloud of dust. Some of the scouts took field glasses and went ahead, while the warriors got out their war clothes and went through various ceremonies.

On the morning of July 25, 1865, a small government wagon train, consisting of fourteen teams, five wagons and ten soldiers of the Eleventh Kansas Cavalry, started for Platte Bridge from Sweetwater Bridge, where they had taken supplies for the Ohio troops. About two o'clock of the same day another party, consisting of ten men from Company G, Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, commanded by Captain Bretney, accompanied by members of the Sixth United States Volunteers and Captain A. Smyth Lybe, left Sweetwater Bridge by way

of Platte Bridge for Fort Laramie to draw pay for their companies.

Captain Bretney's command overtook the wagon train at Willow Spring Creek, where the men had gone into camp for the night. The command halted there for about two hours for supper and to rest the horses. Bretney tried to persuade the sergeant in command of the wagon train to come on, but the latter thought the horses were too fatigued.

At nine o'clock the cavalrymen were again in the saddle and on the road to Platte Bridge, where they arrived at two o'clock in the morning of the twenty-sixth.

Lieutenant Caspar W. Collins had arrived at Platte Bridge a few hours ahead of them from Fort Laramie, Dakota Territory, where he had gone for the purpose of drawing horses [1] for his company, which was stationed on the telegraph line west of Sweetwater Bridge, with headquarters at the latter place, about fifty miles west of Platte Bridge and one hundred and seventy miles west of Fort Laramie. Although the horses were sent on, Caspar remained a day or so at Fort Laramie; but, upon seeing him there, General Connor sent for him and, learning why he was there, ordered him to join his company at once, although the road was infested with Indians.

Lieutenant Collins left the fort with reluctance about July 21, saying that he felt he would be killed by Indians if he made the trip alone. When he arrived at Platte Bridge, he learned that a large party of Indians had appeared in the afternoon and had driven off a number of horses from the government herd. A detachment from the garrison had pursued the Indians and in a skirmish had wounded High-backed Wolf, a chief, who tried to play 'possum when they reached his body. When the soldiers started to scalp him, he begged for his life;

[1] Several accounts state that Caspar Collins had gone to Fort Laramie to be mustered as first lieutenant; but all official records show that although he was appointed to the rank of first lieutenant on May 1, 1865, he was never mustered.

but they shot him and took his firearms and the buckskin jacket he had on, which was fringed with all kinds of hair—white men's, children's and women's. About ten days previous to this time the Indians had captured one of the soldiers and had so mutilated him that his comrades swore vengeance. Blind Wolf, the father of the chief, found his son's body the next morning and took it away.

The killing of the chief put an end to the fighting on the twenty-fifth, but the garrison expected an attack at any moment on account of the demonstrations that afternoon.

The garrison at that time consisted of detachments from Companies I, C and K, Eleventh Kansas Cavalry, fourteen members of the Third United States Infantry Volunteers, and six of Company G, Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, probably numbering in all about 120 men, with the following officers: Major Anderson, Eleventh Kansas Cavalry, commanding the post; Captain Grier, Lieutenant Chancey and Lieutenant Drew of Company I, Eleventh Kansas Cavalry; Lieutenant Walker, Eleventh Kansas Cavalry, Acting Post Adjutant; and Captain Lybe, United States Infantry.

Since the ammunition was low, the men were running bullets and making cartridges; Private James E. Bush, a member of the Kansas troops, being particularly adept at that work.

The men of Company I were armed with Smith breech-loading carbines, those of the Eleventh Ohio had Spencer repeating rifles, and the United States Infantrymen carried Springfield muskets.

When Captain Bretney's men arrived, they did not go into camp as they had planned, but put their horses in the corral and spread their beds in the square of the courtyard enclosed by the quarters, as danger seemed imminent and they desired to take no chances. Immediately upon arrival, Captain Bretney reported that he had passed a wagon train at Willow Springs,

twenty-five miles west of the bridge, and had tried to induce the sergeant in charge to come through with him, telling him that his party was too weak to resist a heavy attack and that, as the country was infested with Indians, an attack might come at any moment. With this report, the commander at Platte Bridge was fully informed concerning the danger awaiting the wagon train, but nothing was done that night.

At early dawn of the twenty-sixth, the Indians, visible on the hilltops in vastly increased numbers, kept riding around the post screeching war whoops and making numerous demonstrations. Skirmishing was carried on for a time, while about half of the Indians, keeping out of sight, went down to the river below the bridge and hid in the brush and timber. The other half went around the north end of the river bottom and hid above the bridge.

The officers of the post evidently held a consultation and decided upon a plan of action. Of the five Kansas line officers stationed at the post, all were on sick call or had similar excuses. So at seven o'clock Major Anderson ordered Lieutenant Collins, with Sergeant Hankammer and Corporal Grimm, to proceed in charge of twenty-five men of Companies I and K, Eleventh Kansas Cavalry, to relieve and bring in the wagon train referred to by Captain Bretney, as it was evident that the Indians would attack and destroy it as soon as it came in sight.

When Lieutenant Collins went to Captain Bretney and told him of the order and asked to borrow his pistols, the captain did everything in his power to dissuade Caspar from going on this extra-hazardous expedition with a command totally strange to him. Other members of his company who were present, including John C. Friend, begged him not to go and told him that he was foolish for complying with the order—that it was not his province to go while Major Anderson had officers of

his own regiment present for duty who were acquainted with the men.

The boy lieutenant knew that the order meant death, but he said that he had never disobeyed an order under any circumstances and could not do so then—saying that he was "no coward" and was "not afraid to go, if the Kansas officers are."

Since his horse was tired out with the trip from Fort Laramie, Collins received a fine, spirited animal—a beautiful iron-gray horse belonging to the leader of the regimental band. The horse, however, was unmanageable under fire.

Just before leaving the post, Caspar turned to James B. Williamson, a member of his company, and said: "Jim, I know that I shall never get back alive. Here is my cap that you have admired so much. Keep it to remember me by." Private Williamson kept the cap as long as he lived.

Then the brave lieutenant, wearing a new full-dress uniform which he had purchased in Fort Laramie and which was conspicuous with the new buttons and straps, with a pistol in each boot top, mounted his horse and rode at once with his party across the bridge, following the road in a northwesterly course near the foot of the bluffs.

When Collins had reached the bridge about a third of a mile away, Captain Bretney with his men, the Kansas band boys and Captain Lybe with his fourteen infantrymen—in all about forty men—started to follow Collins across the river to protect his rear and right flank and to prevent the Indians from cutting off his retreat to the bridge. Jules Seminoe, then a small boy, joined Bretney's command at the bridge.

As soon as the party reached the foot of the bluffs, the table land above was hidden from view; and so Collins could not see the Indians. But the Indians were seen from the post to swarm out from the hills and the brush on the front, right and left of the soldiers and were evidently preparing to attack

him, fifteen hundred strong, as soon as he should gain the high position which they occupied.

About the time that Bretney and Lybe formed a skirmish line straight across from the bridge to the bench or bluff, Collins and his party reached the top of the bench near the graveyard. Indians rose from every sand hill. Six hundred Cheyennes who were concealed in the brush in the bend of the river charged his command in front and on the left. At the same time a force of Sioux, estimated at eighteen hundred, charged out of the ravines, attacking the party from the other side. The Indians were all splendidly mounted, many of them on fine horses which they had stolen from the emigrants.

On account of the nature of the ground, Collins could not at first see the Indians to his right and front, although they were all plainly visible to the men at the post. When he saw the party attempting to flank him, he wheeled his men by fours left into line and ordered a charge, cutting his way through with a loss of three men. But when he struck the enemy's line, the other two parties of Indians came dashing in upon his rear and right in such overpowering numbers that he saw he must retreat or lose all.

The Cheyennes charged in three lines, while the Sioux came in squadrons, the roughness of the country preventing them from massing. Just when the attack was made upon the little command about two hundred Arapahoes, who had been concealed in Dry Creek, attempted to charge up the bottom land to the rear, but a few well directed volleys from Bretney's and Lybe's men sent them back in confusion.

The evidence is not exactly clear, but it appears that Collins ordered a retreat by his left, which movement faced his command towards the post and left him as rear guard. The Indians were by that time massed so closely around the little band that they were afraid to shoot for fear of killing each other, and

THE GRAVE OF CASPAR COLLINS AT HILLSBORO, OHIO

consequently the fighting was for the most part hand to hand.

One man who was riding beside Lieutenant Collins said that Caspar was shot in the hip as he rode down the hill, but that he said nothing about it, so that the soldier could not tell whether the wound was severe. When they reached the bottom of the hill, Caspar heard the cries of a wounded soldier who had fallen from his horse and went back to his rescue. Caspar reached the wounded man, whom he partially raised and tried to assist to a position in front of him, when his horse became unmanageable and whirled. Collins was last seen with both revolvers drawn as his horse dashed into the crowd of Indians. His horse, which was wounded and later captured by the Cheyennes, was known as hard-headed and was always running away.

When Bretney's command realized that Lieutenant Collins was surrounded, they started forward to his rescue, but a large number of Indians attacked them from below on the right and rear, and they were compelled to fall back to their old position near the bridge.

The rattle of the carbines and revolvers soon ceased as the men left in the party could be seen rapidly retreating, strung out for nearly a mile. When Bretney and Lybe saw the men retreating, they recalled their men and fell back to some little sand ridges near the bridge, which they held until the last of the Collins command had passed across the bridge, having left five of their men on the battle field. Twenty of Bretney's men were left to guard the bridge, the balance returning to the post. The Indians then began crossing to the south side of the river and soon cut the telegraph line about a mile east of the post.

During the four hours that the fight was in progress, not a man had been sent over from the post. No good reason was evident why Major Anderson did not recall Lieutenant Collins

and his party when he was being surrounded by so vastly superior a force of Indians whom he could not see but who were plainly seen from the garrison before he had gone half a mile, and when it was absolutely evident that it would be impossible for him to go through with such a small force. It was also a question at the time why Major Anderson had not sent relief to the wagon train under cover of the night or, if unable to relieve them, why he did not send a messenger to tell them of the danger which threatened them.

When the men under Bretney and Lybe returned to the post, a consultation of officers resulted in Captain Bretney being placed under arrest, while Captain Lybe was placed in charge of the defenses, with a detail of forty men under his command, who began to dig rifle pits and throw up earthworks for the twelve-pound howitzer which was in the fort.

It subsequently "leaked out" that Bretney had wanted to take one hundred dismounted men and the howitzer and go to the assistance of the train, which was expected at any minute. Major Anderson objected to this, for he feared that the post would be captured if so large a force was sent out, whereat Bretney used language more forcible than elegant, which caused his arrest.

About half-past one, thirty men were sent down to repair the telegraph line. This party consisted of Lieutenant Walker, Adjutant of the Eleventh Kansas Cavalry, with fifteen mounted men and Captain Lybe with his infantrymen.

Captain Lybe and his infantrymen were to go about a mile to some little sand hills and halt there to protect the rear as well as the retreat of the mounted men. Signals had been arranged: A flag at the station was to be waved if the Indians were moving toward the repair men; and as soon as large bodies of Indians appeared, the howitzer was to be fired.

The men reached the sand hills without molestation. Lieutenant Walker sent four men ahead to watch for the savages, but the cavalry had scarcely reached the break where the line had been cut, a short distance away, when the flag signal was given, followed immediately by the firing of the howitzer. An attacking party of Indians appeared. The adjutant, after firing a few shots, ordered a retreat without waiting for the four men who had been sent on ahead.

The infantry, seeing the cavalry coming back at breakneck speed with the adjutant in the van, began to fall back slowly. When the cavalry had passed them, the infantry poured a volley into the Indian ranks, causing the enemy to circle around, dropping in at the rear of the cavalry and closely pursuing them to a position less than four hundred yards away from the post, where they closed in upon the mounted men and attacked them.

The four men who were left at the rear were attacked by about fifteen Indians. But they did not see the Indians from the south until the Indians were right upon them. One Indian drove a spear through Porter's heart. Another gave Hilty a stab with a spear through the lungs but drew it out as Hilty fell forward on his horse's neck. He clung to his horse until it carried him into the fort. McDougal saw one Indian who was too close to stab him; he drew his revolver and fired into the Indian's body. It was McDougal's last cartridge, and it saved him.

Realizing that the men were in desperate need of help, several men of Company I went out on foot and arrived in time to give relief. The howitzer was run out and several shots were fired at the Indians, who were rapidly falling back out of musket range. Captain Lybe, having returned to the post, mustered his fatigue party and resumed work on the trenches.

THE WAGON TRAIN

In the meantime, the wagon train from Sweetwater Bridge, under the command of Sergeant Amos J. Custard, had started toward Platte Bridge. On the third day of the siege the train passed the camp of the regular telegraph patrol, which was fortified on a large peninsula covered with good grass. The thirty men of the telegraph patrol had seen the increasing number of Indians on the hills around the bridge, and upon attempting to reach the stockade had been driven back by a party of several hundred mounted warriors who completely blockaded the way, angrily motioning them to go back. The men of the patrol had turned from the road and, driving down to the river near Red Butte, had fortified themselves on the peninsula. The wagons were drawn up close in line across the neck of the peninsula, forming a good breastwork. Rifle pits were dug along the river. The telegraph line was down for nine miles, but the men knew that it would be folly to try to repair it.

When the wagon train came in sight, it was hailed with delight by the men of the patrol, who extended a cordial invitation to join them. But Sergeant Custard replied: "No, sir, we don't stop here. We are going into Platte Bridge in spite of all the redskins this side of hell."

A heated argument followed, in which the telegraph men begged the Kansas men to stay until the siege was over, but without avail. As he drove away, the sergeant said: "You fellows are skeered. We will go on and, if you want to be safe, go on with us. We will cut our way through or go to hell a-trying."

Another sergeant tried to urge the senior sergeant to stay one night, but he would not do so. On reaching the top of

the sandy dividing ridge about three miles west of the bridge, the men of the wagon train saw countless Indians galloping and running in all directions. The sergeant sent out an advance party of five men under Corporal James Shrader. As soon as they saw the Indians charging them, they were seized with a panic and dashed toward the river about a mile away. Just as they reached the river, Edwin Summers was shot and fell from his horse. The other four men reached the water. About four rods from the opposite bank, James Bellew was shot and fell into the water.

The other three men escaped into the brush and shortly afterwards met two Indians, whom they shot, one of them being Left Hand, a brother of Roman Nose. The Indians who surrounded the wagon train were led by Roman Nose. The three men turned their horses back into the mountains and left them, going down the ravine on foot. The corporal crawled to the top of a ravine and looked over, but was stunned by the bullet of a sniper. His comrades dragged him back and soon revived him. Slowly the men worked their way down the ravine and through the chaparral near the fort. The Indians saw them when they came out into the open, as did the men from the fort, who ran to meet them and helped them in to safety. These three men, the sole survivors of the wagon train, were James Shrader, Bryam Swaim and Henry C. Smith, Company D, Eleventh Kansas Cavalry.

Shortly after the five men left the wagon train, Sergeant Custard saw the Indians surrounding his party and tried to corral the wagons. In the few minutes that he had, he formed three sides of a square with the three wagons, the west side of the square being open. The soldiers began firing from loopholes, shooting some of the Indians off their horses as they approached. Then the Cheyennes and Sioux backed away and

dismounted, separating to fight on foot. The mules were running wild around the wagons when an Indian rode in and caught the bell mare and thus led all the mules away.

The fight lasted more than an hour, while the Indians dug a large trench and, by the aid of knife and tomahawk, extended it towards the doomed men. As the red men crawled along they kept a pile of sand in front of them, behind which they dug and crawled nearer. The soldiers could see these mounds of sand approaching them but were helpless. When the Indians finally sprang from behind the sand, they found only two or three of the men still alive. These they tortured terribly and mutilated by burning them with irons, tying them to wagon wheels, and doing other acts of extreme cruelty.

That evening William Worrell, Tom Sinclair and John C. Friend of Company G, Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, borrowed three of the best horses from the Kansas band boys at Platte Bridge and went across the river to search for the body of Lieutenant Collins. Failing to find it, they carried in the bodies of the four Kansas men who were killed during the fight in the morning. No attempt had been made during the day to recover them.

At sundown, Captain Bretney was released from arrest and placed in command of the picket guard, which consisted only of his own men, the Ohio troopers. Until nearly nightfall the Indians stayed about the place where the train had been, then many of them moved back to the bluff north of the river. The guards at the post were doubled in number, and extra vigilance was kept during the night.

Mitch and Noel Seminoe, half-breed Snakes, were sent down to Deer Creek, twenty-eight miles away, and were paid $150 each to carry the orders for the garrison there. They made the trip under cover of darkness and did not encounter any of the enemy on the way. As soon as they reached Deer

Creek, Lieutenant Hubbard made a forced march from that place to Platte Bridge, arriving at three o'clock on the afternoon of the twenty-seventh.

Colonel J. Kidd, Sixth Michigan Cavalry, with four squadrons, and Captain Creevy, with five squadrons, were ordered to make a forced march from Fort Laramie to Platte Bridge.

The night of the twenty-sixth passed quietly with the exception of one incident. A picket shot a young calf which he said would not halt when the command was given. The next morning very few Indians were in sight, and by ten o'clock all of them had disappeared.

After the arrival of the troops from Deer Creek, Major Anderson with one hundred and twenty men went up to see what was left of the train and found a sickening sight. Some of the men had bands of iron around their necks; others had heavy chains or telegraph wire wrapped around their bodies; while others were cut to pieces. Very few could be recognized.

The next day a burial party went up and dug a long ditch in which they placed blankets. After wrapping the bodies in rubber blankets, the party buried all of them in the trench grave on the desert.

The Indians had scalped the men but had thrown the scalps down on the ground, indicating that they had not killed as many whites as the whites had killed Indians. About forty trails were made by the poles fastened to the ponies on which the Indians fixed stretchers to carry away the wounded, and it was believed that about sixty warriors were killed and possibly one hundred and thirty badly wounded.

Early in the morning of the twenty-eighth, the Ohio boys resumed their search for the body of Lieutenant Collins and found it near the creek which now bears his name, about three miles from where the fight took place. Telegraph wire had been wrapped around the body and it had been dragged some

distance. One hand and one foot had been cut off, the heart taken out, and the body otherwise mutilated almost past recognition. The remains were carefully wrapped in a blanket, placed in an ambulance, and taken to the post, where they were buried that evening with military honors.

Although Colonel Collins and his friends in the army did everything to have the body sent back to Ohio at once, it was impossible to do so on account of the Indian hostilities and the poor facilities of travel. On August 15, 1865, General Dodge directed all the commanding officers in his command to assist in obtaining the remains and relics of Lieutenant Collins and also assured Colonel Collins that he would do everything in his power to have the remains taken east at the earliest opportunity.

The casualties of the Platte Bridge Fight were: Lieutenant Caspar W. Collins, Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry; William D. Gray with train, Martin Green with train, William H. Miller with train, Thomas Powell with train, Edwin Summers near the river with Corporal Shrader, Samuel Tull with train, Jacob Zinn with train, John R. Zinn with train—all these being members of Company D, Eleventh Kansas Volunteer Cavalry; Sergeant Amos J. Custard with train, Jesse E. Antram with train, James Bellew near the river with Corporal Shrader, Moses Brown with train, George Heil with train, August Hoppe with train, John Horton with train, William B. Long with train, Ferdinand Schaffer with train, Samuel Sproul with train, William West with train (body not found), Thomas W. Young with train—all these being members of Company H, Kansas Cavalry; Adam Culp with Lieutenant Collins, George W. McDonald with Lieutenant Collins, James A. Porter with Lieutenant Walker—these being members of Company I, Eleventh Kansas Volunteer Cavalry; George Camp with Lieutenant Collins, Sebastian Nehring with Lieutenant Collins—

these being members of Company K, Eleventh Kansas Volunteer Cavalry.

Various persons who witnessed the battle of Platte Bridge estimated that from three thousand to five thousand Indians took part in the fight. A note picked up on the battle field, written by a white prisoner, said that the Indians did not want peace, that they were fighting for all time, and that, since the soldiers had killed one of their chiefs in the fight, they were going to destroy the telegraph and were expecting reënforcements. Although an expedition of soldiers was in the Big Horn country near the headwaters of the Tongue River, no effort was made to follow up the Indians to punish them while the troops were available. The Ohio troops took part in many minor battles and skirmishes in the course of the following year.

The Fort Phil Kearney Massacre, the Custer Massacre and numerous other battles were fought before the Indians were finally subdued and treaties were concluded. By the time peace was restored, the Ohio men who had lived through those strenuous years from 1862 to 1866 as Indian fighters and frontiersmen had long resumed their duties as tradesmen and citizens back in Ohio, where they were mustered out in July, 1866.

LIEUTENANT COLLINS

Lieutenant Collins was brave, manly, and generous to a fault. He was a straight, delicate youth, and was always laughing. His love of outdoor sports and his life in the open soon gave him the strength and the endurance which he needed to carry out the work of his military life. When he first came west he was a great favorite with the Ogalala Sioux, with whom he spent a great deal of time, and he learned to speak their language quite fluently. He wrote excellent letters home and it is believed that he kept a journal, but no trace of it has been found.

Lieutenant Collins showed that he was descended from men and women who were educated Christians, brave, loyal and cultured. His dauntless bravery in carrying out the orders of a superior officer, although obedience seemed to mean certain death, stands out a conspicuous inheritance from his gallant forefathers. In writing to his father, General Dodge said: "Your noble and gallant son, whose noble death is deeply regretted by all, furnishes by his brave conduct a bright example for heroism to the country and to my command."

On November 21, 1865, Major General Pope issued an order which read:

"General Orders No. 49

"The Military Posts below mentioned will hereafter be designated and known as follows, subject to the approval of the War Department:

. . . . . .

"II. The Military Post situated at Platte Bridge, between Deer and Rock Creeks, on the Platte River, will be hereafter known as Fort Casper,[1] in honor of Lt. Casper Collins, 11th Ohio Cavalry, who lost his life while gallantly attacking a superior force of Indians at that place."

The next summer Major Squire, in command of a squadron of the Sixth West Virginia, enlarged Fort Casper from a small station to the capacity of five hundred men, and the fort was not abandoned until 1867.

The bridge was located just two miles from the center of the present city of Casper, Wyoming. The present spelling of the name "Casper" has arisen through a mistake, as it was named for Caspar Collins, who gave his life in performing his duty.

[1] A mistake in spelling.

REMAINS OF CASPAR COLLINS

The next spring after the Platte Bridge fight, on March 19, 1866, the remains of Lieutenant Collins were transferred from the cemetery at Fort Casper and were received at Fort Laramie by Captain J. L. Hunfreville, commanding the Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, who attended to the arrangements for the proper honor and ceremony at the interment.

In a special order issued regarding this interment, Colonel H. E. Maynadier said: "It affords the Colonel commanding, peculiar satisfaction to unite with the comrades of this gallant young officer in rendering this tribute of respect and thereby making the appreciation felt for his bravery, his devotion to his duties and also conferring the last sad testimonial upon his remains."

When the members of the Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry left Fort Laramie on June 14, 1866, for their march eastward to be discharged after three years of service,[1] they took the remains of Lieutenant Collins with them. On the second eve-

[1] The official list of battles in which the regiment fought, not including the numerous engagements between its detachments and the Indians, includes:

South Pass	November 24, 1862
Sweetwater Bridge	April 3, 1863
Mud Springs Station	February 6, 1865
Rush Creek	February 8, 1865
Near La Parelle Creek	February 13, 1865
Near Poison Creek	March 8, 1865
Fort Marshall	March 28, 1865
Deer Creek Station	April 21, 1865
Camp Marshall	April 23, 1865
Deer Creek	May 23, 1865
St. Mary's Station	May 27, 1865
Elkhorn	May 28, 1865
Near Deer Creek	June 3, 1865
Sage Creek Station	June 8, 1865
Sweetwater Bridge	June 22, 1865
Rock Creek	June 30, 1865
Platte Bridge	July 26, 1865
Powder River	August 20, 1865
Indian Viliage (Tongue River)	August 29, 1865

ning of their journey they reached Fort Mitchell, fifty-five miles east of Fort Laramie, where they were joined by Companies E and H of their regiment. On the fourth evening they reached Mud Springs, where they camped. The march was resumed immediately, with no extraordinary incident until on June 20 they experienced one of the worst hailstorms they had ever seen. Both horses and mules were knocked down by the hailstones. Some of the stock broke loose and fled to the bluffs for shelter, but the men were on their way by sunrise the next morning and by ten o'clock had recovered all of the stock.

Although they arrived at Fort McPherson on Sunday, they had no trouble in drawing rations to last to Fort Kearney, which they reached on June 27, having marched 365 miles in twelve days. From Fort Kearney to Fort Leavenworth the march was without unusual incident, although on the Little Blue River the soldiers found the settlers in great fear of the Indians, who had commenced depredations in that vicinity. Many of the settlers had moved their families to the thicker settlements on the Big Sandy.

After the brown prairies of Nebraska Territory, the green fields of wheat and oats in Kansas were welcome sights to the men, who reached Fort Leavenworth on July 7 after a twenty-three day march. They remained there until July 14, when they received orders to be sent to Columbus, Ohio, for pay and settlement, having been mustered out by Lieutenant Williamson on July 12.

The men reached Tod Barracks on July 18, having been sent by way of St. Louis and Indianapolis. The next day several of the officers telegraphed to Colonel Collins, asking permission to keep the body of his son with them until they could be sent home, as they wished to accompany the body to Hillsboro.

The permission was granted, and on Saturday, July 24, 1866, at noon, the escort arrived from Columbus under command of Major Buck, formerly First Lieutenant, Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry. The escort was made up of Captain Jacob L. Humphreyville, Company K; Captain James A. Brown, Company G; Captain L. B. Harlan, Company I; Lieutenant John B. Furay, Company G; Lieutenant George B. Marsh, Company E; Lieutenant Walter Florentine, Company K; Lieutenant John R. Moloney, Company I; and Lieutenant George S. Reed, Company I.

A volunteer escort from Captain Waddell's Company, Ohio National Guard, accompanied the remains from the depot to the family residence—the home of flowering dogwoods and the old-fashioned garden from which the young hero had ridden away four years before.

At three o'clock services were conducted by Dr. Steel, and at four o'clock the remains were laid to rest in the cemetery. A dignified monument bearing the following inscription marks the sleeping-place of the gallant hero of the Platte Bridge fight:

"Lt. Caspar Wever Collins, Born Hillsboro, Ohio, September 30, 1844. Killed in battle leading a forlorn hope against Indians at Platte Bridge, July 26, 1865.

In the family Bible may be found the inscription as it appears on the stone, and below it in the handwriting of Colonel Collins are the words: "Pure, brave, hospitable, generous, true."

CASPAR COLLINS

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COLLINS, JOSEPHINE, sister of Caspar Collins, Hillsboro, Ohio

CONDIT, MR. L. R. A., Barnum, Wyoming

JOHNSON, MRS. HENRY, childhood friend of Caspar Collins, Hillsboro, Ohio

MCMULLEN, JOHN M., postmaster, Hillsboro, Ohio

MARKS, MRS. ANNA HUGHES, family friend, Hillsboro, Ohio

MATHER, COTTON, boyhood friend of Caspar Collins

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YEOMAN, MRS. MARY BOYD, playmate of Caspar Collins, Hillsboro, Ohio

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CAHILL, comrade, Dennison, Ohio

W. F. B., Company G, Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry

BULLOCK, W. G., a resident in the mountains for many years

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PART II

THE CASPAR COLLINS PAPERS

PART II

THE CASPAR COLLINS PAPERS

WHILE on their trip to the West and during their stay in the Rocky Mountains, Colonel Collins and Caspar Collins wrote many interesting letters home and kept on file exceedingly valuable reports. These papers, which are herewith reproduced, complete the details for the pictures which have been sketched in the preceding pages of this story of military life on the Overland route.

LETTER FROM COLONEL COLLINS

OVERLAND CITY, UPPER CROSSING,
SOUTH PLATTE, May 23, 1862.

MY DEAR WIFE:

We arrived here last evening and here part with the Wisconsin Artillery with which we have been in company from Fort Leavenworth. I found a letter from you dated May 8th and received one some three or four days since on the road which was dated I think April 27th. These are the only letters I have received since leaving Marysvale, from which place I wrote you. My occupations are so varied and constant and my responsibilities so great that I have no time to write or time to think much of home except at night when all but the guard are at rest. For two or three weeks I have had command of the expedition, Col. Leavenworth having left us. Taking all

things into consideration our progress has been good, with such a force, numbering 600 men and over 800 horses and mules, and through such a country when there is no wood to cook or water except the muddy Platte or dull sloughs and no grain for the horses except the little we can carry, hence it cannot be expected that man and beast would be always healthy and comfortable.

LETTER FROM COLONEL COLLINS

In Camp, Scott's Bluffs,
May 27th, 1862.

My dear wife:

I intended to have written you a long letter from Overland City or Julesburgh, which is the upper crossing of the South Platte where we parted with the artillery, and made a commencement, but the day we spent there was so occupied in dividing the trains and stores that I found myself more occupied than if on the march, and besides we had to ford the Platte and encamp on the north side so as to be ready for starting at six o'clock next morning.

The Platte there is nearly a mile wide, shallow and full of quicksands,—it was also high and we anticipated difficulty, but we had a magnificent crossing, in every way successful. On arrival the night before, I took a detachment of about twenty picked men with a guide, all on horseback, and the guide and myself leading, we crossed over, feeling our way and learning the channels, which are constantly shifting, as the stream is nothing but a moving mass of sand and water. In crossing and recrossing we "got the hang" of the ford, and only one man got a ducking. In the morning we doubled teams, putting ten and twelve mules to a wagon, and got over our commissary and ordnance stores and in the afternoon moved over in

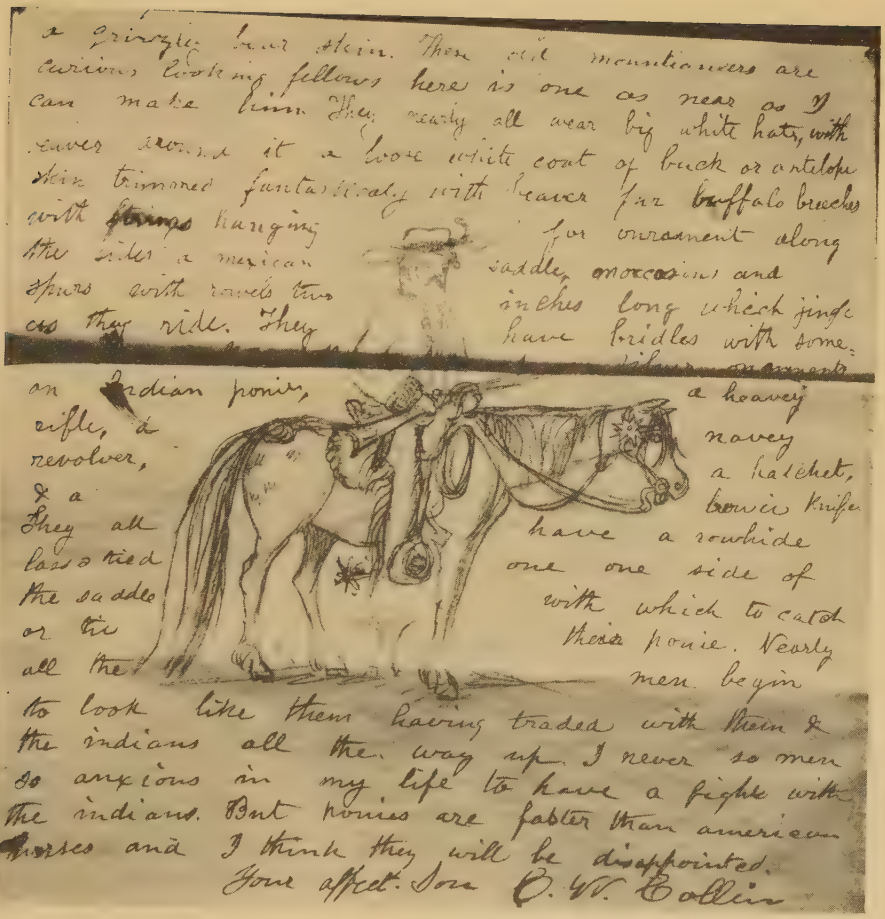
scattered order—our company leading, then the wagon train, and then the remaining companies following. Everything went like clockwork and, though many along the route had prophesied that we couldn't cross at all, nothing was lost but a tent pole and a garment or two jostled from the wagon in the plunges from sand bar to channels of deep water.

We are now moving rapidly toward Ft. Laramie and shall reach there on Friday night of this week if no accident happens. Since the artillery left us, we can arrange our march better. We have, however, a company of Kansas infantry that I was ordered to bring forward from Mud Spring, about forty-five miles back, but they have their own tents, wagons, and rations and give us very little trouble.

Our march from Ft. Leavenworth to this place has been upon the whole a very successful one, and men and horses have got through remarkably well and most will be ready for service on arrival. Of course, at this season the movement is a difficult one, especially for stock, there being little grain, little hay, and less corn. Until five or six days past, the grass has been of little use. Since leaving Ft. Kearney we have had no hay, and indeed had none for sixty miles back of that, for at the last point when we expected to get it they had but three tons of spoiled prairie hay for which they charged thirty dollars a ton, and we thought that for 824 mules and horses it would do little good and therefore let the owner keep it. I think he will have it on hand for some time. Until last night we have had no corn for three days, but have now overtaken a train sent forward for our use from Ft. Kearney before our arrival there and shall now have a little, say a quart or two a day, till we reach Ft. Laramie. This corn has cost the Government fourteen dollars a bushel to purchase and place it here for us, as the wagon master of the corn train tells me. It has been hauled about 500 miles, so that we ought to be economical

in its use. Little or no corn is raised this side of the Little Blue River, and most has to be hauled from near the Missouri River. At our camp when we have had corn for the last ten or twelve days the Indians, especially the squaws and children, gather up each kernel as carefully as if it was money. I understand they boil and eat it. The warriors do not condescend to do much work, but the squaws seem to belong to the laboring class.

We are in the country of the Sioux or Dacotahs, as they are also called. The tribe numbers some 40 or 50,000, and they occupy the territory we pass through for some 300 miles east of Laramie. Their title is unextinguished, but the Government has forts and stations and the traders have ranches at various points. They are greatly alarmed at our presence and think we come to make war upon them and take their land and property. I have taken great pains to disabuse them, and to reassure them that if they are good Indians they shall be protected. About ten days ago, soon after we got into their territory, a chief came to our camp bringing with him about 200 of the tribe, more than half of whom were women and children. I directed them to be brought to my quarters, and they arranged themselves in two circles before my tent, the males in front of the women and children in the rear, the extremities of the circle touching in the shape of a new moon at its first quarter. The chief made a speech and I replied. I got a young half-breed to interpret, to whom I paid the magnificent sum of $1.50. My remarks were very conciliatory and were received with evident satisfaction. As each sentence was interpreted, the males gave a grunt and ejaculated "How How!" meaning "Good!" I directed the men to give them any food and old clothes they might have to spare, and they fared pretty well and went away satisfied. They are great beggars, but I cannot find that they have at any time stolen anything from us, though all the traders along the route have told us


a fringe of hair stein. Then all mountaineers are
curious looking fellows here is one as near as I
can make him. They nearly all wear big white hats, with
beaver around it a loose white coat of buck or antelope
skin trimmed fantastically with beaver fur buffalo breeches
with fringes hanging for ornament along
the sides a mexican saddle moccasins and
spurs with rowels two inches long which jingle
as they ride. They have bridles with some
on Indian ponies, a heavy
rifle, a navey
revolver, a hatchet,
& a bowie knife
They all have a rawhide
has a tied one one side of
the saddle with which to catch
or tie their ponie. Nearly
all the men begin
to look like them having traded with them &
the indians all the way up. I never so men
so anxious in my life to have a fight with
the indians. But ponies are faster than american
horses and I think they will be disappointed.
Your affect. Son C. W. Collins

DRAWING OF A MOUNTAINEER

(In a letter from Caspar Collins to his Mother)

they would do so. On the other hand they have manifested a readiness to help us. A few nights ago we lost two of our best horses. A lieutenant and sergeant spent a day in hunting for them and came into camp at night after forty miles' ride and reported that they could not be found. An Indian followed us and brought them, having found them among the hills while hunting antelope. Of course he was well rewarded, and I am sure that if the Indian character was better understood and justice done them by respecting their customs, protecting the worthy and only punishing the bad, they would give less trouble. It seems to be the height of the ambition of any one of them to get a paper from a United States officer stating that he is a good Indian, a friend to the white, who will not lie or steal, and I am often applied to for such. The only damage they have done us is in selling some of the men buffalo robes that proved lousy, and in some of the tents the boys have had a lively time with their bedding. I have been obliged to take several smokes with their chief and find I can get along very well by drawing in mildly and blowing out strong.

On introducing Caspar to the chiefs in my tent, they inquired of me "Papoose?" and on my replying "Yes," they shook hands with him very earnestly with a loud "How! How!"

I have employed an excellent interpreter whom I intend to keep permanently if the Government will pay him. His name is Leo Pallardy, a Frenchman, or rather of French parentage, born in St. Louis, raised in St. Charles, Missouri, and for the last seventeen years a resident among the Indians and agent and trader. He was interpreter for General Harney and also for the Sioux chiefs at Washington City on a visit to the President a few years ago. He is about 32, a very good scholar, capital hunter (he brought in an antelope yesterday) and thoroughly acquainted with the country and the Indians from

the Rocky Mountains to the Missouri. His dress is a black buckskin hunting coat, highly ornamented, and light buckskin pantaloons with moccasins. He occupies the tent with Caspar and myself and makes himself generally useful in packing, unpacking, loading, etc. etc.

Perhaps you would be interested in our manner of life on the plains. The bugle sounds reveille at daylight, which is a little after four o'clock, when all are expected to rise, dress and put bedding in order. The bugle sounds for roll call about half past four, for sick call at five o'clock, and at six o'clock we march. Cooking and eating breakfast, feeding horses, saddling, striking tents, packing and loading tents, cooking utensils, baggage of all kinds into the wagons keep all busy, but we rarely miss five minutes of coming to time and usually start precisely at the minute. I mount about fifteen minutes before six and pass through each company to see their progress and urge up the tardy, and all being in rank, mounted at six, the advance is sounded. The cavalry lead, the artillery while with us followed, the wagon train came next, the ambulance, containing the sick, leading, and a rear guard of twenty cavalry close the procession.

Our march has been a rapid one; some days we have made thirty miles and over, and one day thirty-six. After about an hour's march in the morning we usually stop fifteen minutes and then go forward, the men walking and leading for another quarter of an hour. About ten or eleven o'clock, if good grass can be found, we stop for half an hour or more to feed and water and then go on. The wagon train does not stop at all, and the cavalry, moving faster, is able to walk, then stop, and still keep its position in front. When all have moved out of camp, I go forward to select a place for grazing or watering, and also, as we come toward camping time, gallop on to select the ground and see that camp is laid out properly. We reach

our camp from two to five o'clock and have been as late as six. The tents are then pitched, baggage unloaded, horses unsaddled, watered and picketed out to grass, fires built, supper cooked (we have no dinner) then comes roll call. The horses are brought inside the camp lines and fed with corn if we have any. The guards are set, the countersign given, and all retire. Lights are put out and, with the exception of the challenge of the guard, the call for guard relief, or occasional howling of the wolves, all is still till morning.

I do not go to bed till all is still, and usually read awhile after lying down to compose myself, and often go out to test the guards by crossing their lines to see whether they are wide awake and challenge promptly and properly. Five hours' sleep I find enough, and indeed I do not often get as much.

Our bed is an India rubber blanket spread upon the ground in the tent and the buffalo robe you lined for me and Virginia bound, laid upon it hair upwards. Upon this we lie, and a blanket or two and my shawl complete the bedding. For a while I found the under bed rather hard and got up in the morning rather sore, but now sleep pretty well. Most of the officers have cots or mattresses, but I find after a month's trial that the ground will do, and no matter how wet it is, the India rubber blanket will keep us dry. My dress, beginning at the head, is a broad-brimmed drab hat, very firm and flexible, a flannel shirt over a muslin one, a dark blue woolen blouse, sky blue regulation pantaloon, cavalry boots reaching to the knees, and spurs. Buckskin gauntlets, a belt with a revolver, cartridge box, cap box, etc., attached, but no sabre, all swords being packed away during the march.

Caspar's dress is a blouse, cap, army pantaloons (gray) and boots.

Our diet is rather hard, the lack of vegetables being a serious drawback, but our appetites are generally good, though some-

times I run down my appetite before supper is ready and feel the lack of some of your choice cooking. Upon the whole, however, my health has been good, and there has not been a day since I left that I have not been able to do duty, though when I had the sick headache I shirked a little.

Caspar is entirely well and eats like an Indian, making at least a hand and a half. He has got over his cough, is able to stand a great deal of exercise, especially in traveling, and I think the trip and exposure will do much to strengthen his constitution. He is getting to be more shifty and useful as we are thrown on our own resources, and I have great hopes that the necessities of our situation will teach him industry and self-reliance.

We have some sick men, and the salt meat with the hard biscuit, without vegetables, begins to cause symptoms of scurvy. Fever, inflammatory rheumatism and affections of the lungs have been the usual complaints. At present I do not think we have any one dangerously sick, though the ambulances are tolerably full. There is no place to leave them here and we must take them along. We lost two men at Ft. Kearney, the only deaths in the battalion except the one at Hillsboro. Both occurred during the three days we stopped there to recuperate after hard marches and great exposure. One was Carey A. Manker,[1] an excellent young man to whom I had become very much attached, and who gave promise of great usefulness. He was acting as Sergeant Major and I saw him and needed him often and always found him ready. He was barely twenty-one, full of health and vigor, but such constitutions seem most exposed to the disease of which he died, typhoid fever.

The other was Allen,[2] a member of Capt. Van Winkle's company. His widow lives in Hillsboro. I never knew them

[1] Died May 11, 1862. Member of Company B.
[2] James Allen. Died May 13, 1862. Company D.

before he enlisted. His captain reports him a good soldier, always ready to do his duty. We buried them both in the Ft. Kearney graveyard, an enclosure of about half an acre near the fort, one on Sunday and the other on the Tuesday following, the whole battalion of cavalry and most of the artillery attending. In each case the procession was headed by the captain of the company to which the deceased belonged. A Lutheran clergyman, who was a member of the artillery, and myself, a military escort followed with arms, the corpse and pall bearers next, the company to which the deceased belonged next, and the cavalry and artillery dismounted and unarmed followed. The coffin being lowered, I read the church burial service; a hymn was sung by the men; a prayer was made by the clergyman, Mr. Funk. Extra volleys over the grave from the military escort and a return to camp completed the ceremony. The most perfect order prevailed, in that respect far exceeding any funeral in our own community. In both cases I had double boxes prepared so that the remains could be removed if desired, and had foot boards placed with proper inscriptions.

A member[1] of the battery has also died at Ft. Kearney since we left, who was too unwell to bring along. The enclosure of this cemetery would seem very curious to you. It is a wall of turf cut brick fashion and laid up regularly like cut stone or brick. The houses, stations, stables, ranches and all other buildings, with very few exceptions, for three or four hundred miles across the prairies are built of the same material, for no stone or wood is to be had. Wood is hauled sixty or eighty miles in carts, often twenty-five dollars a cord. The roof is usually poles covered with turf, and the whole structure, though it looks very insignificant, is very warm in winter and cool in summer. It is called "adobe" (pronounced "doby").

[1] William B. Long. Died May 19, 1862, Member of Company B.

LETTER FROM COLONEL COLLINS

Camp Alexander,
May 30th, 1862.

My Dear Wife:

I was not able to mail my letter, for there is no post-office between Overland City and Laramie, so I must wait till we reach there today. We had a terrible day yesterday. A terrific thunderstorm came on us soon after starting and settled into a cold rain blowing violently into our faces, which continued all day. We came into camp thoroughly wet and very cold, for the air was cold as November, evidently coming from the Rocky Mountains now. Horses and men both suffered, and many of the mules are this morning unfit to haul.

I have therefore ordered a delay till nine o'clock, when we expect to start. It is raining a little and blowing hard from the mountains, but we must reach our destination tonight if possible. I have not got my clothes quite dry yet and feel a little stiff after the wetting of yesterday, but upon the whole I think I am in good condition for service. I am interrupted and must close but will add a line at Laramie to inform you of our safe arrival.

Caspar rode in the wagon yesterday and kept dry. He is getting black, hungry, and hearty. The trip is evidently benefiting his health. I fear Caspar does not write long letters.

You speak of your Soldiers Aid Society. Of course you could not send anything cooked so far, but if we could have a good lot of needle books, such as you made for us before we left. The men are getting ragged and there are neither tailors, seamstresses or new clothes to be had either here or in the mountains. They could be sent by express in a box with any other articles which would be convenient for us, but send no preserved or

canned fruit unless in tin, as it would be liable to break. . . . Put in plenty of pins, buttons and thread, and some darning needles and woolen yarn would not be objectionable. . . . I should like to write to you of the wonderful peculiarities of this country, the scenery, the birds and animals, the flowers, and other things, but cannot now.

Mr. Palardy came in this afternoon since I commenced writing, with a mountain sheep which he had just killed. It was very fat, had immense horns, etc. . . . The candle is going out. Good night!

Yours faithfully,
WILLIAM

LETTER FROM COLONEL COLLINS

BATTALION HEADQUARTERS, O.V.C.,
Ohio Cavalry, Camp, May 31st, 1862.

MY DEAR WIFE:

We reached Ft. Laramie last night and are now encamped just outside the fort. It rained all day yesterday but it is fair this morning and we are engaged in drying and cleaning up. How long we shall be engaged here I do not know, as our plans are not yet settled. It is probable, however, that I shall go forward into the Rocky Mountains in a few days, select my headquarters and be in command there. I prefer it to remaining in charge of the fort. Colonel Alexander and his two companies of regular infantry will go to Ft. Kearney in a few days. He has been stationed here a long time and wants to be relieved. There will then remain two companies of regular cavalry, one of Kansas volunteer infantry and my four companies, of which I shall probably have companies of cavalry in the mountains and the Kansas infantry and one company of

cavalry will remain at the fort. This is the substance of a short conversation I have had with General Craig since my arrival, but nothing is fully settled. I have as yet received but two months and eleven days pay, but expect two months more soon, of which I will send you some money. I am gratified at your management of everything at home and feel sure that you will have everything cared for and that I shall be delighted with the condition of everything. What a pleasure it would be to see you and the little girls for an hour. Kiss them tenderly for me.

Your affectionate husband,
WM. O. COLLINS

LETTER FROM CASPAR COLLINS

SWEET WATER BRIDGE,
Sunday, June 16th, 1862.

DEAR MOTHER:

We are camped at this point, about a hundred and eighty miles from Fort Laramie. We had a very short stay at Laramie, only about four days. We are going farther tomorrow. The paymaster is here, paying off the men. This is the worst country for winds I ever saw. Yesterday, very soon after we started, it commenced blowing and raining full in our faces, and after a while it turned to hail and it came down so hard that they had to stop the train until it slackened. After we got in camp it commenced to blow, and it is blowing yet. My father and Mr. Pallady and myself went up last night to the Independence Rock, about a mile above here, right below the Devil's Gate, to shoot at a mark and try a new rifle. Immediately under the rock it was tolerably still, and we commenced shooting at a piece of paper about a hundred yards off. The guide,

Mr. Pallady, hit it and I went to see where it was. I took the piece of paper in my hand and a gust of wind coming down from the mountains blew it away and it went up almost out of sight, when another blast struck it and brought it back. Our other guide, Major Bridger, went off this morning up in the mountains to get out of the wind. He says he is going to get in some cañon and make a large fire. For a few days after we left Laramie, we camped overnight on beautiful streams about the size of Clear Creek or larger. The water was clear and full of fish. At each one we caught a fine lot of fish. On the hills after you leave Laramie, flowers are thicker than I ever saw them before. They are of all colors, but the handsomest is a blue flower that looks just like a hyacinth. Yesterday morning Mr. Pallady shot an antelope near the camp, and he and I and Louis, our French servant, dragged him to the tent before my father and Major Bridger were up. Antelope is the finest flesh ever tasted. It resembles venison a little but it is not so dry. We have a herd of cattle along that supplies us with fresh beef. The quartermaster has golden syrup, loaf sugar, java coffee, etc., for sale to the officers at cost prices, and we also have game and fish and we live in the eating line first rate. We have to bake bread, and we have got a skillet that does it first rate. We also roast meat and such things in it. We have a cook and besides, Mr. Pallady, Louis and I help. There is no one messing with us now but the two guides, our mess with the quartermaster being too large. I pity anybody that has to buy anything in this country. There is only one house about every fifteen miles and now and then the ranch of some trader. They ask two dollars a pound for butter, and other things in proportion. We buy nothing, however, from them. The Indians keep stealing horses and other stock from the mail stations, and now and then they shoot a man, but troops cannot get near them. Wherever there are a few men stationed, they are

as quiet as lambs. There is, besides our company, a company of Mormons under Lot Smith, a son of old Joe, and two companies of regular cavalry.

This stream is very high, being over the banks. Shipley's company [1] is camped the other side, the regulars about two miles above, and the Mormon company at the Devil's Gate. We have lost three officers: Lieut. Love, of B Co., is on General Craig's staff. Lieut. Koehne [2] is post adjutant at Fort Laramie, and Lieut. Van Pearse [3] is there in command of some men and weak horses that we left. We stopped last night at a small stream, in some places only about a foot or two wide. Louis and I fixed a corn sack and caught about fifty good fish about six inches long. We see bear every day or two but have shot none yet, they running away too fast. They are the regular grizzly, and one of them was so large one of our officers mistook him for a buffalo. Up at Independence Rock, as it is called, there are a great many names carved by persons who have passed through. There are a great many immigrants going up the road, chiefly Mormons. There are also Mormon trains loaded with provisions going down the road. They take their provisions to Denver, or Pike's Peak, as it is known with us. There are also persons going to the gold mines in Washington Territory. Where we were shooting at a mark, there was snow under the rock on the north side.

There is a kind of a grouse here called the sage hen. The males are as large as a turkey hen and the females about the size of an old shanghai. I have not shot any of them yet, we having only been where they are for two or three days and the weather is too windy to hunt. Shipley's company is going to remain here. Nearly all our men are well. My friend, the assistant surgeon, is at Fort Laramie as post surgeon. I wish he

[1] Company A.
[2] Company C.
[3] Company A.

was along, for he is so pleasant and good-humored and used to make such an agreeable riding companion.

Give my love to Josie and Fanny and Aunt Virginia, and tell the two first that I will answer their two letters at the next stopping place. Remember me to Uncle Carlton and tell him that he ought to be here with his rifle to shoot antelope, and his shotgun for sage hens. The sage hens you can nearly step on before they fly up, and they are found out in the open country. Give my respects to Aunt C. and the two Marys.

Good-bye!

Your affectionate son,

C. Collins

LETTER FROM CASPAR COLLINS

Camp Highland, South Pass,
June 30th, 1862.

Dear Mother:

We have established a permanent camp here. We are about 300 miles from Fort Laramie. This is a tolerably pleasant place, but there is no timber within two miles. Game was plenty here in the earlier part of the season, but the emigrants have nearly chased it all off and their oxen have eaten nearly all the grass. In the mountains the other side of the river there is said to be plenty of game, but it is impossible to cross now, the river being so high.

Yesterday a teamster of Lieut. Glenn, who was left back to guard a provision train, came into camp with the word that they were attacked by Indians. In about an hour my father left camp with over a hundred picked men. They got there too late, the Indians having left after killing two emigrants. The quartermaster was in quite a fever that while the command was

away, loading all the extra arms in his department, making everybody load theirs, but we saw no Indians either. One Indian shot three arrows at Lieut. Glenn, one of them passing between his arm and body and hitting a rock behind him. There was about four hundred Indians, and Glenn and thirty men chased them all.

Sage hens are very plenty about the camp. But they are not good now, having young ones and being setting. My little pups are growing finely and, what is most remarkable, having no fleas. Every time Henry McHugh blows his bugle, the white one runs out and stands beside him and howls away. Lieut. Hunter [1] is drilling 15 picked men from each of the companies that are here as scouts. They are making very good progress. Nearly every tribe of Indians that are in this country are at war with one another—the party of Sioux that was making the trouble being an unsuccessful war party against the Snakes and North Band of Comanches. When Indians start out on a war party, they take off every ounce of clothes except a small strip about their middle and paint themselves all over with all kinds of devices. They also shave their heads all except the scalp knot which they leave on. A war party rather than be derided when they go home will sometimes kill some of their own men to show their scalps and will steal anything they can for booty. I have a pretty good selection of birds and other things drawn, and when I get a few more I will send them home. My father just opened the stores he laid up in Leavenworth. He has pickled cucumbers and onions in abundance, French mustard, Worcestershire sauce and pepper ditto, green tea and other things too numerous to mention. We have yet a jar of strawberry preserves left, which we intend to eat on the 4th of July. The flood which is over the bottoms this spring has killed all the wild strawberries with

[1] Battalion adjutant.

which it is usually covered. There are no other fruits in this country but plums, cherries and sarvice berries. They say that the cherries are not like our cherries but are like the old-fashioned blackhearts in Ohio. I have two guns and two dogs and another one I can call mine if I want to, and when the sage hens get through breeding I will have some fun, and I will have more when the streams get lower and I can fish for trout. I have a short Enfield on which I had the sights altered so that you can shoot as close as any hunting rifle.

Here is the kind of a house we live in. We have my father's square tent with the fly to sit under as a porch in hot weather and a Sibley tent which generally accommodates 17 men below. In the Sibley tent we eat and Mr. Pallady sleeps. Major Bridger and my father sleep in the little lodge, as the major calls it, and our cook sleeps in another tent yet. My clothes have about given out, and I wear government clothes which I find vastly more comfortable. The Mormon company of cavalry which was camped about four miles from here gave Lieut. Hunter a grizzly bear skin.

These old mountaineers are curious looking fellows. Here is one as near as I can make him.[1] They nearly all wear big white hats with beaver around it, a loose white coat of buck or antelope skins trimmed fantastically with beaver fur, buffalo breeches with strings hanging for ornament along the sides, a Mexican saddle, moccasins, and spurs with rowels two inches long which jingle as they ride. They have bridles with sometimes ten dollars' worth of silver ornaments on, Indian ponies, a heavy rifle, a navy revolver, a hatchet and a bowie knife. They all have a rawhide lasso tied on one side of the saddle with which to catch or tie their ponies. Nearly all the men begin to look like them, having traded with them and the Indians all the way up. I never saw so many men so

[1] Drawing in pencil.

anxious in my life to have a fight with the Indians. But ponies are faster than American horses, and I think they will be disappointed.

Your affect. son,
C. W. Collins

LETTER FROM CASPAR COLLINS

Camp Highland,
July 6th, 1862.

Dear Mother:

Things are very dull in this camp. There is no game in season but antelopes, and I can not kill them; and the river has been too high to fish, but it is falling. Captain Vanwinkle's and Captain Mackey's companies left yesterday to guard the road below here, and none but Captain Hays's is here. There are also a few of Mackey's and Vanwinkle's men here who are sick or their horses are not able to travel. We still have very good rations, white sugar and java coffee being issued because the carriage costs as much for an inferior article; and it is about 1100 miles, that is an item. We still have plenty of antelope meat, which is the best in the world. Lieut Vananda has just got back from escorting the judges of the U. S. court to Utah. He brought back with him a pair of elk horns six feet long, and the distance between the tips of each is about four feet. Before long we are going on a hunting, fishing and scouting expedition among the Wind River Mountains 50 miles from here. There are buffalo, elk, bear, antelope, mountain sheep and goats and two kinds of deer, besides small game. The brook and lake trout are also there in greatest abundance.

I have one of the prettiest little ponies you ever saw. She is gentle as a lamb. You can shoot off her or leave her unhitched

and she will stay by you or follow you. She is a Shawnee pony and is better than the Sioux or Comanche ponies because she is better trained.

The Shawnees are a race of half civilized Indians who till the ground in the summer and go off in the winter to the buffalo country and hunt, returning in the spring. Their ponies are better than the mustangs of the Comanches or the ponies of the Sioux. The color of my pony is black with a long mane and tail. A good many of the men have bought ponies and ride them to save their other horses. We have desiccated potatoes to eat, and they are precisely like other potatoes when cooked. They look like corn meal when first taken out of the package. The horses swim the river every day to get grass, having eaten up all on this side of the river. We miss the fruit we had at home, there being none at all where we are camped. Back towards Laramie there was plenty of cherries and plums and gooseberries, but there is none within 10 miles of here. The mountains are still white with snow, and there is a large snow bank within three hundred yards of camp. It seemed strange to have snow on the 4th of July. When the weather is as warm as it is at home, you can go and get among the snow where it is ten feet deep and yet perfectly clear.

Adjutant Hunter has resigned and Lieut. O. S. Glenn has been promoted to fill the vacancy. Lieut. Hunter says he will pay you a visit as soon as he gets to Cincinnati. He expects to get a place under Frémont. Lieut. Glenn is about the best fitted for the situation of any officer in the battalion except Lieut. Clark, who would not accept it. Lieut. Van Pearse has resigned, but his resignation has not been accepted yet. Captain Mackey will probably resign also, owing to very bad health, having been sick ever since he came to this camp. All the other officers are well.

There is now in each company a place for another lieutenant,

and in Mackey's company there will be places for two. Lieut. Wesley Love, B.C.O., is on Genl. Craig's staff, and Lieut. Koehne is post adjutant at Fort Laramie. Doctor Regner was hunting in the mountains the other side of the river and says it is a beautiful place.

Give my love to all my enquiring friends, and tell Cousin Mary and Aunt Charlotte that I received their letters.

Your affectionate son,
C. W. Collins

LETTER FROM CASPAR COLLINS

Upper Crossing of Wind River,
August 13th, 1862.

Dear Mother:

We—that is, my father, Adjutant Glenn, Doctor Regner and I—have been on an expedition to Wind River around the mountains. There were two guides and 22 men along, and also the wagon master and three teamsters. We left here about 7 o'clock one morning and traveled 35 miles the first day and 40 the second, which brought us to Green River, which is the main branch of the Colorado. I had my shotgun along and had a very good time shooting at sage chickens and ducks. We had very little but game to live on, as the sergeant of one squad drew 9 days' rations for 10 men instead of 12 days' rations as he was ordered. We ate an elk, three deer and seven antelope up clean besides sage hens, ducks, pheasants and jack rabbits. We also had a great many fine trout. We crossed Green River at the ferry that has been established there lately for emigrants going to Salmon River, the horses having to swim. We camped that night on what the mountaineers call Horse Creek, and there we saw a white pony which we tried to catch

without success. My father caught some very fine trout, however. We followed Green River up for 2 days more, and then we crossed the mountain to Wind River. We had to cut our way through a pine forest for over 5 miles and then found ourselves on the brink of a precipice 200 feet high. It was then two hours after dark, and we were very hungry, and there was neither water nor grass where we were. So we led the horses and mules down in a zigzag direction and took two lariat ropes of rawhide and tied them together and fastened them to the hind end of a wagon, and all hands caught hold and let them down. The hill was so steep that a man could not walk to the top of it except by going up where there were trees and holding on to them. After we got one wagon down we went up and brought the other down in the same manner. It was after ten o'clock when we camped on the Left Fork of Wind River, and then by the time we got our supper cooked and eaten we were sleepy enough to go to bed. One night it rained and sleeted like everything, and I had to sleep out. Leo and I had a rubber blanket apiece and we borrowed another, and we stuck one up on two sticks behind the wagon and laid another on the ground and on it we made our bed and covered it with the third. My father and the balance slept in a tent with 26, and we could have slept there too, but some of the men have vermin, and it was so close that we could not stand it. It was the only night the tent was put up, and it rained twice, and there were two heavy frosts. One night when we made our bed on the side of the mountain, I slept above and Leo underneath. He rolled out, and I thought someone was pouring ice water on me, but it was only him crawling in. He was covered with frost and so stiff he could hardly move. We slept with three blankets over us, our clothes and two army overcoats with the capes spread out, which were as good as two more, and an India rubber blanket over them. It was amusing to see old

Major Bridger cooking his supper. He would take a whole jack rabbit and a trout about eighteen inches long and put them on two sticks and set them up before the fire and eat them both without a particle of salt and drink about a quart of strong coffee. He says when he was young he has often eaten the whole side ribs of a buffalo. My father and I and a teamster chased two grizzlies about 3 miles and then came upon them in a ravine. I was on my pony, my father on Woodpecker, and the teamster on a mule. I held their beasts while they got behind some rocks within seventy-five yards of the bear. There was an old bear as big as a cow, and a half-grown cub about the size of a common black bear. It was the night after a rainstorm and not one of the guns would go off. When the old bear heard the snapping, she stood on her hind legs and the cub ran like everything. She would run until she caught up with him, when she would stop until he got ahead again, when she would move on. They got in some rocks where we could not find them any more. Leo Paliday caught two ponies and tried to catch several more, but his lariat was worn and would not throw well. A person can not hunt by himself, for there are Indians lurking all through the country. They would bark like prairie wolves around our camp, but there were too few to attack us, and we put out all the fires so they could not see where to shoot. It is impossible to catch them on our horses, as they are not used to living on grass and give out. While we were gone a teamster at our camp was herding the mules, and the Indians killed him and stole the mules. They robbed him of all his clothes, and they found him naked and stiff, lying in the sage. He had three bullet holes through him. Captain Hays chased them and got all the mules except a few which they had killed because they could not keep up. There was a big battle fought here two years ago between the

Snakes and the Sioux. Every now and then some of the boys find some bones. Captain Hays was taking a walk yesterday afternoon and he found a whole skeleton. It is a subject of great interest to Dryden.[1] Three days ago I killed seven sage chickens in half an hour. The Mormon emigration has just commenced passing. Three hundred wagons passed today. Over in the Wind River valley there is neither rain nor snowfall, the mountains around it catching it all. In the spring when the snow melts, it irrigates the ground so that a fine crop of grass comes up and is good all winter. Wind River is called Big Horn on the map and is one of the headwaters of the Yellowstone, which runs into the Missouri. I will write again whenever I can send a letter. There is no mail running through here now.

Your affectionate son,
C. W. Collins

MEMORANDUM BY COLONEL COLLINS

Big Sandy, 35 Miles

From upper Sweetwater crossing by the Lander route to Big Sandy, crossing the head of Sweetwater, is about thirty-five miles and is the best camp for the first day. Little Sandy is twelve miles this side; may be flush now, but dries up. Big Sandy can be crossed, but is broad and shallow. At the crossing of Big Sandy it is four miles from the mountains. There is plenty of grass in a large flat near there. It heads way up in the mountains—in flats and lakes, about 20 or 30 miles. In those mountains Green River and Wind River and other rivers all

[1] Samuel A. Dryden, hospital steward.

head up there in those large plains. Lewis Fork and the Missouri also head there. The snow was hardly melted yet in the mountains, and the streams will not be down until it does. From Big Sandy to New Fork of Green River it is 25 miles. There is very good grass and level country there. New Fork is larger than Sweetwater at this place. A mile from there is another fork, and a little further there is another. They are both about the size of the other. They are all easy to cross, shallow and wide with sloping banks. The third fork is called Piney and is three miles from the first. From the last it is about 8 miles to Green River proper, about 20 miles from its conjunction with the New Fork. It is easy to cross, not being much larger than New Fork where you cross it. It is all a fine grass country, it growing everywhere over the plains.

On Green River and New Fork there is an abundance of large pine and cottonwood timber. Green River and New Fork are both about 12 miles from the mountains. There is an abundance of beaver on all those streams. There is river alkali there. There is a great deal of white clay on those streams there. It is good for cleaning and dressing leather. From Green River the next stream you cross is Lead Cash Creek, which is about half the size of Sweetwater. It is twelve miles from Green River. It is all flat country between the streams and is covered with grass. The third camp would be on Piney or Squaw Creek, which runs in Green River and is about the size of Sweetwater. It runs out of the Wasatch range of mountains. The place for a camp would be up the creek in the mountains about twenty-five miles. The fourth camp would be on Salt River. It is a stream a little larger than Sweetwater. The next or fifth camp would be about twenty-five miles from the last on the Blackfoot River in the round valley. You can follow up a stream of . . .

RECAPITULATION

First camp	Big Sandy	35 miles
Second camp	New Fork	25 "
Third camp	Lead Cache Creek	27 "
Fourth camp	Piney, foot of Wasatch Mountains, or Squaw Creek	25 "
Fifth camp	Salt River	25 "
Sixth camp	Blackfoot River	30 "
Seventh camp	On Blackfoot	20 "
Eighth camp	Ross Fork	25 "
From there across the valley, the Portmuff River to Fort Hall		15 "
		227 miles

From Fort Hall it is about 125 miles to the Three Tetons from which it is about 25 miles to Jackson's Hole 150 miles

From Salt river it is only about a day's march over to Bear River about 12 miles from the lake

5 camps from Sweetwater to Salt Creek	137 miles
5 cp. from Salt Creek to Bear River	30 "
7th cp. to Bear River, mouth of Thomas Fork	25 "
8th cp. down Ham's Fork to California road	30 "
9th cp. to Green River Ferry	28 "
10th cp. to Big Sandy	30 "
11th cp. Upper Crossing of Sweetwater	35 "
	315 miles
	137 miles
6th from Salt Creek to Bear River at mouth of Thomas Fork	30 "

7th on Oregon road to Ham's Fork	30 miles
8th then down Hams Fork to California road	30 "
9th to Green River Ferry	28 "
10th to Big Sandy	30 "
11th Upper Crossing of Sweetwater	35 "
Average traveling, 29 miles a day	11)320 miles
	29 miles

LETTER FROM CASPAR COLLINS

INDEPENDENCE ROCK, ONE MILE ABOVE
SWEETWATER BRIDGE, August 31st, 1862.

DEAR MOTHER:

We are now on our way back to Fort Laramie, but have been here for several days, waiting for a supply train to come up. There is no one going down but my father, Dr. Regner, Adjt. Glenn and the noncommissioned staff. Hospital Steward Dryden is going to stay with Van Winkle's company, or part of it, at this point. We have made a journey to Green River lately. We were gone only six days. My father, Lieut. Vananda, Major Bridger, Mr. Peck, the operator for the telegraph company and myself were in a mess together. We had game the whole time: jack rabbits, sage hens, and ducks and snipe.

I killed ten sage chickens one evening just before getting into camp, and they made a meal for the six men and teamster in the other mess and two meals for us. They are, when young, as white as quails or chickens and taste like the latter. I received Aunt Virginia's letter day before yesterday. I suppose you are now in the midst of fruits, etc. I hope all the plums and cherries down between here and Laramie are not all gone, as they are said to be very good. There is the greatest abundance of the fattest little ducks here that you ever saw. They fly in flocks

of from 10 to 12 to a couple of hundred. They are not very much larger than wild pigeons, and are almost the finest eating I ever saw. My father and I killed a dozen in a little while the other morning. There are also snipe, curlews, plover, sandpipers, etc., in great numbers. The men are all in very good health, only two that I know of being unwell. Shipley's and Mackey's companies are both over on the New Route running up the South Platte to Cache la Poudre river sixty miles from Pike's Peak and from there across to Ham's Fork, twenty-five miles from Fort Bridger, where it unites with the other road. When we get down to Laramie, we are going to take a trip around there with General Craig. Adjt. Hunter has not gone home yet, but is still down at Laramie. It is about 200 miles from here to the fort. Our four horses are pretty well ridden down. The gray and the pony, however, are in very good order. My father's fine horse has had the lung fever but is picking up now, since he has got well, very fast. We have two of the fastest little dogs you ever saw. One of them will swim any place to get a duck. Both of them will set like old dogs. We have quit using the officers' tent and got a Sibley tent from Captain Mackey, where we have air and room. A large Mormon train passed here yesterday, of 80 wagons, most of them with 5, 6 and 7 yoke of cattle. All of them were from Denmark and Sweden, and very few could talk English. They will go to Salt Lake and get a small farm for each family after they go through their bondage, as it is called. They work for the church at a dollar a day until they pay for their transportation, subsistence, etc. Both men and women wear large wooden shoes and walk with sticks. They are an ignorant looking set and look dirty and travel-worn, the greater part having walked on foot all the way from Omaha on the Missouri. Hays's and Van Winkle's companies are going to be stationed on this road, Hays's company at Upper Crossing, near Pacific

Springs, and at Three Crossings, 60 miles this side, and Van-Winkle's at this place and Platte Bridge.

Your affectionate son,
C. W. Collins

LETTER FROM CASPAR COLLINS

Fort Laramie,
September 20th, 1862.

Dear Mother:

We received a visit today from a party of Cheyennes who were going north to Pumpkin Butte on Powder River to hunt buffalo. They expected to find game on the road but got nothing but a few antelope and deer and were getting quite hungry, which means, with Indians, a week's fast. Some of the chiefs came in the morning, and the balance followed in the afternoon. They seated themselves in the parade ground, the chiefs in a small semicircle, the old men and medicine men on pow-wows in two small semicircles at each side a little back, and then the warriors behind them. Behind them again the boys were squatted, and in the background the women and children. The most prominent among the children was a little fellow who was dressed in a pair of richly embroidered moccasins and a string of 15 silver dollars beaten out and fastened on a strip of buckskin and tied to his hair. In these he ran about very spryly. He was the pride of his attentive parents.

There were about 30 lodges, with about 90 warriors and about 300 women and children. Some of the men had guns, but most of them had bows and arrows. The bow in the hand of an Indian is more successful against buffalo than a rifle. They hunt together on horseback, surround the buffalo, which when they run out are transfixed with numerous arrows. They can

easily overtake a buffalo on their ponies, kill nearly all in a herd. They live very fat when they fall in with buffalo, but when they have to depend on small game they nearly starve. Some of the Sioux found a herd of buffalo below here about fifty miles. They collected twenty or thirty hunters together and killed every single buffalo. Indians cannot be taught to use any kind of a wheeled vehicle.

When traveling they pack all their worldly goods on ponies, depend for sustenance on what they kill on the way, erecting their lodge when the weather appears stormy, and at other times sleeping in the open air. *Paterfamilias* leads the van, behind him follows his faithful spouse with the youngest papoose and the favorite lap dog on her horse, and her daughters transport the luggage and extra children. The poles of the lodge, about a dozen in number, are divided into two equal portions, which are strapped on either side of the pony and tied together at the lower end, and the covering of the lodge wrapped up and tied on them. The covering is of buffalo hide dressed.

None of them ride the hunting horses, which, with the dogs and colts, follow at their ease. They have great numbers of dogs, who live a very precarious existence. When they are among buffalo and their masters use only the hump, tongue and ribs, they live an excellent life, but when provisions are scarce all is changed. Then they are the devoured instead of the devourers. The large breed resembles wolves, and the small ones foxes very closely. The boys drive the extra horses on the road. When they establish themselves in camp, they live an indolent and easy life. They camp by wood and water and good grass. The horses are loose during the day, but in the evening they are collected and picketed by the feet in the immediate vicinity of the lodge. They stretch the skins of anything they kill upon the ground, and the squaws tan it with

the brains. If they were at all provident they could get along very well, but they are not, and in the winter are often obliged to subsist on the buds or berries of wild roses, seeds of the prairie sunflower, bark and dog meat, so that in the spring they are not overfat.

The horses browse on bushes and burrow in the snow for the dead and frozen grass, so that they are not in very good plight for buffalo hunting. The dogs are also pretty-looking figures, eating scarcely anything the entire time but scraps of one another. An Indian man, dog, woman, child or horse never dies of starvation. And if it was not for their own wars and the smallpox, I believe they would multiply greatly.

The Crows, although they live in a more northern climate, winter themselves and their horses a great deal better, for they are always in the midst of buffalo, and not being quite so lazy, they strip cottonwood bark for their horses. They have a larger breed of dogs, which they make carry burdens on a journey and thus save their horses. The Flatheads, Nez Percés, and Pend d'Oreilles, who also live north of here, take excellent care of their horses in winter and have the finest horses of all the Indians. The Snakes or Comanches have great numbers of horses, which they eat, like the Tartars of Asia. They live, like the Bedouins of the desert, by robbing travelers. They have such good horses that it is impossible to catch them. When a Snake warrior goes to war, he takes two horses—one to ride to battle on, and the other to ride into it on, if necessary, to ride away also.

This post is a very pleasant place when you get used to it. I don't think Adjutant Hunter will get home at all. His resignation was accepted both by my father and General Craig, but they telegraphed from headquarters east that resignations were not accepted except when the officer was incapable of

performing his duties. Major O'Ferrall is also disappointed. General Craig is a very pleasant man. Lieut. Van Pearse is provost-marshal for this part of the territory and has a case nearly every day.

Your affectionate son,
C. W. Collins

LETTER FROM CASPAR COLLINS

Fort Laramie, Nebraska Terr.,
Sept. 21st, 1862.

Dear Fanny:

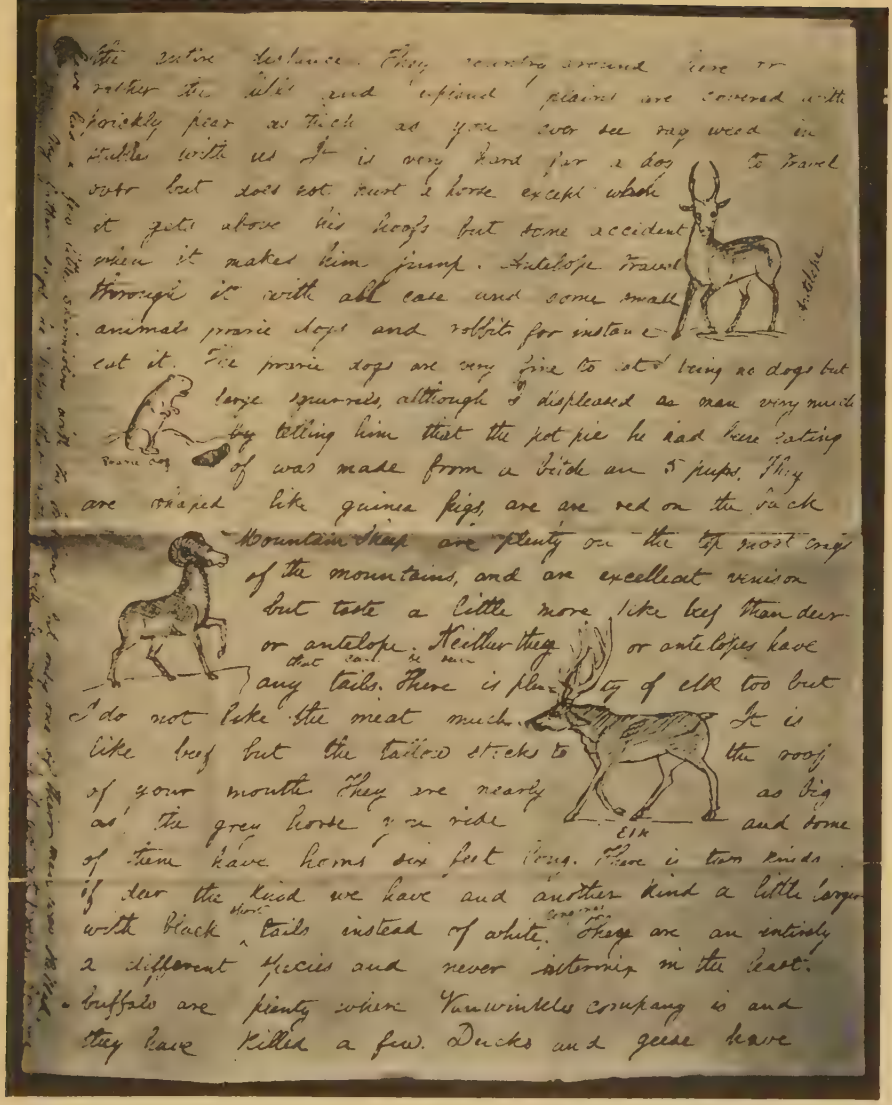
I was very glad to receive a letter from you. My father was quite indignant at your saying your Uncle Carter was like Mr. James Fallis. I hope George May will have a pleasant trip to Prince Edward's Island. Do not ride the pony to death between you. I wonder what you would think of the little Indians at this place. There are a great many of them playing about the fort all the time. A few days ago Sam Mackey and the Irishman who works for General Craig went duck hunting, and as they were crossing the Platte in an old boat it went to pieces, and as they had to swim out they lost their guns. Genl. Craig offered Old Smoke, the chief of the Sioux tribe at this post, ten dollars if he would get them. He took about twenty little Indians down to the river and set them to diving. The water was about 12 feet deep and running so swift that when the little beasts would dive it would wash them way down stream and they could not touch the bottom where the guns laid. Only one little heathen could find them at all, and he was not able to bring them up. When the Platte falls again, he says, they will get them. All the little Indian boys do is

to shoot blackbirds and such other small game with bows and arrows. I saw a little pagan shoot one of the general's pigeons this morning as it was eating, a little piece back of the fort. If the general had caught him, he would have been a doomed papoose; but as he did not, I suppose it was all right. General Craig has an old antelope which is very tame and runs about the garrison and butts people and eats bread and is very fat, which the young Indians watch with a great deal of attention, and the little wretches look as if they would like to try their hands on larger game than blackbirds. There are plenty of fish in the Laramie River at this point, and there are also plenty in the Platte. I see by the *News* that there is to be a fair this year, the same as usual. Give my respects to Mr. Rieinger and family. I hope all my friends are well. Our two little dogs are quite well and are getting larger and smarter nearly every day.

There are cats enough at this place to delight you for ten years. I saw several Indians barbecuing a very fine fat one this morning. They were nearly through skinning her and were going to boil her in a capacious kettle or caldron, like the witches in Macbeth. The whole family was gathered around, licking their lips in expectation of a treat. Boiled cat was to them an unusual delicacy which they properly appreciated. I suppose you think it a terrible thing for them to eat cats, but for my part I wish they would eat half about the garrison and then commence on the dogs—not ours, however.

My father got him a bedstead to sleep in, but was driven out of it the first night by the previous occupants, who were very indignant at their being disturbed. He killed two of them, however, and was mad enough to have killed all if he could. Give my love to Josie. I hope you will have good health until I get back. Good-bye for the present.

C. W. Collins



LETTER FROM CASPAR COLLINS TO HIS UNCLE

(Written from Fort Laramie, December 15, 1862)

LETTER FROM CASPAR COLLINS

FORT LARAMIE, NEBRASKA,
September 21st, 1862.

DEAR UNCLE:

If you want to shoot feathered game, you ought to come to this country. Sage hens are more plenty than quail in Ohio, where we have been all summer. There are five varieties of grouse found in this country. A few miles from the fort you find prairie chickens a little different from those below. Up in the barren sage-covered plains, sage hens are found in abundance. In the pine forests wood grouse and pheasants are found, and on the snowy pinnacles of the mountains a fifth kind is one which sometimes comes down on the plains in winter. The prairie chickens are a little different from those found in Illinois and Kansas, being grayer and having a broad black band across their tails, and resemble the pheasant a little. Their meat is white, and they lie well before a dog. Sage hens are, I suppose, the largest kind of grouse in the world, being about halfway in size between the turkey and prairie chicken. The hens are about the size of shanghai roosters, and the cocks as large as brant geese. They lie nearly as closely as quails or prairie chickens, and after you get used to their flying up so suddenly before you, you can kill them nearly every shot.

I killed ten one evening, and I have killed six or eight a good many times. They are dark gray and in shape resemble the pictures of the English pheasant a good deal, having a long tail. Their legs are feathered like a pheasant's down to the toes. If the sage or wormwood or whatever it should be called is taken out of their bellies as soon as they are killed, they resemble turkeys very closely, but if it is not, they are bitter and almost unfit to eat. The wood grouse is larger than a prairie

chicken and is lead-colored, or rather blue—nearly the color of a quail's tail. I never saw but one, which one of the men killed while hunting elk in the mountains. They are said to be very plenty.

The pheasants are the same as they are with us. The other, I suppose, is the arctic grouse, and I have not seen any of them, but they have been described to me by a great many persons, residents of this country.

There are hares or jack rabbits all through this country; they are of two kinds, I think, from observation, and are nearly as large as foxes. I call one kind that lives in the rocks, conies, and the others which reside in the plains, hares. There is a small rabbit very much like ours, which stays in the brush along streams; they are red-legged, but otherwise like our rabbits, although smaller. Geese are plenty, although I have never killed any yet. Ducks of a great many different kinds are also abundant on the creeks, ponds, sloughs, etc. My father and I killed fourteen as we were going along the road before we got to our noon camp. Among the kinds found are mallard, wood duck, widgeon, green- and blue-winged teal, a brown duck called summer duck, and a fine large kind that I am sure is not found with us, called the Pacific canvasback. The green-winged teal are found mostly in marshes, from whence they spring up to be shot, like snipe. Curlew, plovers, sandpipers and our kind of snipe are also plenty. I have not seen a woodcock, however, since I left Fort Leavenworth. There is one kind of curlew about the size of a pheasant and the color of a woodcock, that is the best of the tribe.

We have two very good pups. One of them is, I believe, the best I ever saw of her age. She will swim out in the raging Platte or Laramie and bring out a duck as well as any old dog I ever saw. She stands as steady as a rock. She is white, with liver-colored ears, and the other one is speckled.

There are only one or two of the regular officers here that I know of that hunt, and they are too much occupied for anything of the kind. Most of the volunteer officers just kill game when they can see it squatted before them, and as a general thing do not condescend to do that. General Craig hunts a little, and he has an Irishman with him who is a very good shot. He was in a boat on the Platte which went to pieces with him, and he lost his gun and now I am able to beat him, as he has only an old gun which he borrowed from a clerk in the sutler's store. There are a good many dogs here, but they have nearly all been spoiled. Below, I represent as nearly as I can the sage hen, but I have got the bill a little too long. The breast is the color I have represented. To the right of it is a curlew. I would like to hear from you very much. Do you intend to kill any quails this fall? I expect they will be very plenty.

Give my love to all.

C. W. Collins

LETTER FROM CASPAR COLLINS

Fort Laramie,
Sept. 21st, 1862.

Dear Mother:

I received your letter of the 18th of August today and was very glad to get it. I also received one from Aunt Virginia at Sweetwater Bridge. Tell Fanny I am very much obliged to her for her entertaining letter. I hope the pony will live over his treatment by the combined forces. I am sorry Georgey Reiniger was whipped for breaking the spring of the carriage. We get the war news at this point at least half a day before you do. I received a *Highland News* by mail today. There is a mail starting back tomorrow. The mail does not travel through this country now, because of the Indian troubles. It comes up as far as

Julesburg, on the South Platte, about 200 miles from here, from whence it goes to within 60 miles of Pike's Peak, and from there to Fort Bridger. There are two companies of regular cavalry now in this department, and our troops and a few companies of Kansas infantry, two I believe. They make the soldiers wear white gloves at this post, and they cut around very fashionably. A good many of the regulars are married and have their wives and families with them. There are five women allowed to a company, who are furnished with transportation and rations and wash and mend, etc. Their pay is kept out of the soldiers' wages and given to them on pay day. In this post there are little houses prepared for their especial benefit, of two rooms each. They are nearly all Irish and Germans, but are a great deal more intelligent than I expected to see them.

Any of the noncommissioned officers are better than a great many commissioned officers of volunteers. Sergeant Mackey is clerk to the brigade adjutant, Captain Eno, at this post. When a person first goes to bed in this country he can hardly bear a single blanket over him, but towards morning he can bear two or three large buffalo robes. I have a pair of large buffalo robes now. One was a present from Monsieur Pallady, and the other my father bought from a trader. I will write again the next chance I have to send letters. I hope you will write me many more letters. I was with my father on his trip to Wind River.

Your affectionate son,

C. W. Collins

(The following extract of a letter is the remainder of a letter written on October 8 from Fort Laramie. I have the original in my possession.—A. W. S.)

(Extract of a letter written on October 8, 1862 from Fort

Laramie, to Mrs. C. W. Collins by her son, Caspar W. Collins.)

We received your telegraphic despatch of September 24th about two hours ago stating that you had not heard from us since the 24th of August. We have written very regularly whenever there was any chance to send a letter. I read your letter with a good deal of attention but do not know how to reply to it. A mail starts from here tomorrow or next day, I am not certain which. Quartermaster Woodrow will soon start home. The paymaster will be here about day day after tomorow and will pay the troops since the 1st of May. Tell Dr. Sams that I have written him three letters and he has not yet replied to any of them. I suppose he has commenced killing quails. What is Mike Dunn doing; is he as truthful as ever? I am sorry that the vineyard has been so unproductive on Mr. Rieniger's account but hope that other things will make up to him for it. My father was quite unwell this morning but is now about well. All the captains are here waiting for the paymaster. When we came back from the other fort [1] the party had the wagon loaded with game which we distributed among the officers and others of the fort. We had some sage hens stuffed by Flannigan's wife who is a regular and keeps the boarding house for the officers and gave them 4 for doing it. We eat there a few meals but they did not suit my taste as well as the dishes our cook who is a miner and has been in Mexico for several years. He cooks all kinds of outlandish dishes one of which he calls *borro*, a Mexican dish, which takes all night to cook. It is a kind of a baked chowder and is excellent. There is a bird in the pines which is about the size of a common hen. It is blue about the color of a wild pigeon. They are the best eating of any bird I have ever tasted

[1] Fort Halleck.

except the quail. They call them mountain grouse and they are excellent shooting. There is a good many squirrels but they can hardly ever be found to be killed. I am very sorry to hear that Charley Trimble [1] has been killed, more so than any I can now think of in the service. The rebels have been worsted a good many times since you wrote and I think it was their last struggle, and it will probably be soon concluded. Give my love to Aunt Virginia and others. I hope you are all well. John Young has my sincerest sympathies and I hope they will not draft him. I am your affectionate son,

C. W. Collins

In the last week in September 1862, Colonel Collins took a party including Caspar Collins, Major Bridger, Lieutenant Glenn, Sergeant Morris, the wagon master, two privates, a teamster and a cook and made the trip from Fort Laramie to Fort Halleck, at the foot of Elk Mountain. Captain Craig, Colonel Clark and John Reid were also members of the party for two days.

This trip was for the purpose of exploration and inspection and after a short rest at Fort Halleck, the party returned to Fort Laramie over a route through the Black Hills that had not previously been explored.

Caspar's statistical account of this journey which follows was evidently made from a report of his father's, or was dictated by his father, and is exceedingly accurate considering the fact that the country had not been surveyed and was entirely new territory to this party:

[1] Charley Trimble, who was a friend of Caspar Collins, went into the battle of Bull Run with his regiment. When the regiment started to retreat, young Trimble saw that the color bearer had been killed and that the flag had fallen and would be left behind as a trophy for the enemy unless someone rescued it from the exultant and fast advancing Confederates. Instantly he turned back alone and, reaching the flag, raised it from the ground, drawing the enemy's fire. Holding the flag in his hand, the lad fell facing his foes.

REPORT OF RECONNAISSANCE OF ROUTE FROM FORT HALLECK TO FORT LARAMIE

Estimated distances on Old route from Ft. Laramie to Fort Halleck

1.	From Fort Laramie to camp on Laramie River	14 miles
2.	Mouth Chug Creek	6 "
3.	Night camp on Sebeal Creek (Sybille)	16 "
4.	Night camp on Sebeal Creek	8 "
5.	Noon camp in cañon	14 "
6.	Night camp on dividing ridge	8 "
7.	Noon camp on Laramie River	10 "
8.	Night camp on Rock Creek	15 "
9.	Night camp on Medicine Bow River	24 "
10.	Fort Halleck	10 "
		125 miles

Estimated distances on new route:

Night camp on Medicine Bow River	15 miles
Night camp on Rock Creek	18 "
Night camp on mountain	20 "
Night camp at cliff and spring	8 "
Noon in impassable cañon	4 "
Night camp in mountain prairie on Laramie slope	3 "
Night camp on Laramie River	10 "
Fort Laramie	30 "
	108 miles

In writing of the trip after the return to Fort Laramie, Caspar Collins told his mother that he rode the entire distance on a mule; he described the game they had killed on the way; the splendid scenery they had seen; and also wrote in detail concerning Major Bridger. This letter which was loaned to

Mr. C. G. Coutant by the mother of Caspar Collins was published in part by Mr. Coutant in his "History of Wyoming." In one paragraph Collins says of Major Bridger: "He is totally uneducated, but speaks English, Spanish, and French, equally well, besides nearly a dozen Indian tongues, such as Snake, Bannock, Crow, Flathead, Nez Perce, Pen d'Orille, Ute and one or two others I cannot recollect."

As estimated in Caspar's letter of the thirtieth, the return trip to Fort Laramie from Halleck took seven days.

FORT LARAMIE

In a report which Colonel Collins made of Fort Laramie, he said:

Constant change of troops and commanders has caused some neglect of public buildings and property; Q.M. & Com. buildings should be recovered; fences around the hospital and graveyard are destroyed and should be rebuilt; blacksmith shop is too near the Com. and Q.M. bldg.

Ordnance store was constructed during past summer, but roof is of mortar and so flat and heavy as to cause leakage and cracking.

Slaughter house needed and has just been finished.

Six shops for company and post artisans have been built during the past month and are now in use.

Com. and Q.M. should be larger, so that store can be arranged systematically. It should be remembered that this is an important supply post.

Sawmill forty-five miles distant can furnish lumber, and the soldiers can do the building and repairing, as many of the volunteers are tradesmen.

Matter of hay: O. P. Hereford made contract on June 25, 1863, to furnish 700 tons of hay. Only about half furnished.

Most of horses and mules not imperatively needed are being herded on Chugwater and Rawhide Creek.

Clothing: Supply large. Forwarded to the 11th. Reg. Is average quality and in good order. Large supply of infantry clothing, old pattern, badly injured by time, moths, etc. Suggest that it could be sold to teamsters at fair valuation or presented to Indians who are suffering.

Tents: The 1st Battalion, which crossed the plains in spring of 1862, and the 2nd Battalion, which came out in the fall of 1863, were both supplied with the Sibley tent, suffered from hard use, long marches and high winds.

Wood: Obtained 8 to 12 miles from the post and is principally dry and green pine and cedar. Teamsters and details of men to cut, collect and load.

Pork in barrels: Some injured by brine leaking out of barrels.

Flour: Second-rate quality. Evidently made from spring wheat. Not sour or spoiled, but some complaint has been made.

Rice: Apparently old and somewhat yellow, but fit for issue.

Absence of vegetables makes it important to have the men serving at this post and in the mountains furnished with special sanitary supplies to prevent scurvy. Recommend that vegetables be raised around the fort.

Hospital. Admirably kept—model of neatness and system, due to Dr. T. M. Smith, citizen physician. Dr. Undershill, surgeon of the 11th. O.V.C., relieved him. Medical orders not honored. Contagious diseases not there. Little scurvy, though common at detachments stationed on the Platte and Sweetwater Rivers.

Drill daily from 9 to 10 A. M. and from half past one to half past two P. M. A night school for officers from 7 to 8 P. M. on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and of noncommissioned officers

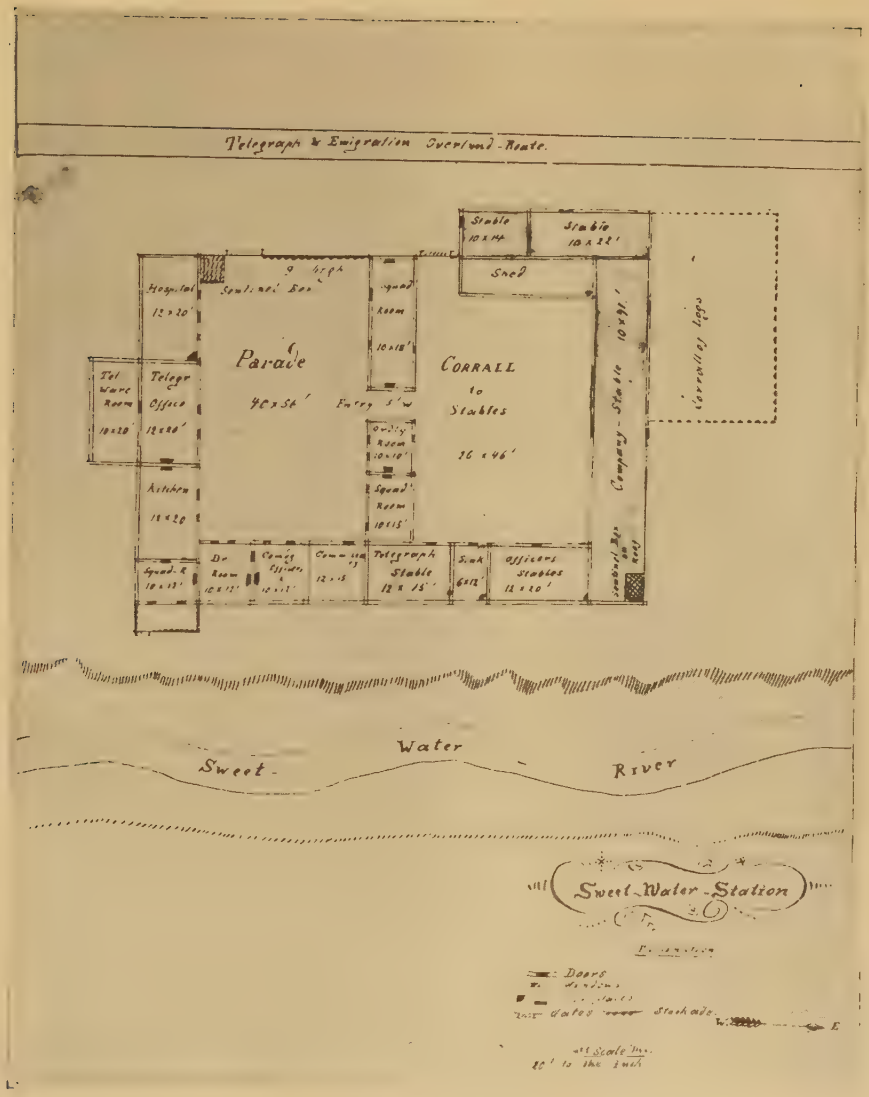
between the same hours on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

A howitzer battery consisting of four pieces was brought from St. Louis with the Second Battalion. A detail was made of two commissioned officers—2nd Lt. I. L. H. Humphreyville, Co. A., and 2nd. Lt. C. W. Collins, Co. G—and 48 noncommissioned officers and men to man it. Their diligence in drill and rapid improvement does great credit to officers and men.

The chaplain has services on Sundays. There is a post library of six hundred books of miscellaneous character and a reading room for soldiers, well furnished with newspapers and magazines. The literary material is circulated among distant posts and exchanged in the manner of a traveling library system.

Amateur brass band has been organized by Mr. Cahtrines of Denver. Field band consisting of three drummers and three fifers has recently been organized. (These three items reveal the social interests of the soldiers.)

Fort Laramie was on the north side of the Laramie River. According to a map drawn by Caspar Collins and his father, there were, beginning with the road going down the Platte river from the southeast corner of the fort and going up the river: blacksmith shop 33 x 41; saddler's shop; corral 70 x 265; with small corral attached 36 x 37; adjoining quartermaster's stable 32 x 285; quartermaster's store 30 x 100; quartermaster's store 31 x 144; quartermaster's store 30 x 100; commissary 30 x 118; quartermaster's department 30 x 118; two sets of quarters for laundress and teamsters 27 x 53 and 127 x 29; two sets of similar quarters 27 x 53, with yards 41 x 53; lumber yard; carpenter shop with yard and building formerly used as telegraph office. In center of parade grounds was flagstaff, southeast of which were four cannons. Around parade ground on south side were: guard house 17 x 53; ice



PLAN OF SWEETWATER STATION

house; two sinks; company quarters 21 x 80; kitchen; commissary and ordnance room 20 x 80; band room 21 x 33; with yard 21 x 39 facing river. There was a foot bridge across the river just southwest of band room. On the west side of the parade ground was officers' quarters with kitchen 95 x 71 and yard 71 x 95. To the north of the parade ground were: kitchen and officers' quarters 33 x 34 (3); to the right of these, the headquarters building, 116 feet at back by 53 feet, with porch across the front 70 feet long and a yard at back 78 x 146, facing the road up the Laramie River. Just to the left of the headquarters building was the adjutant's office, 17 x 18. East of headquarters building were: officers' quarters with kitchen 20 x 70 and yard 70 x 60; magazine 29 x 29; arsenal 29 x 29. On the east side of the parade ground were: company quarters 40 x 76 and two kitchens 20 x 76; company quarters 24 x 76; kitchen 18 x 53; company quarters 24 x 76; kitchen 18 x 44; ordnance room 18 x 35; bakery 17 x 26 with an addition 15 x 15. To the north of the bakery were: ice house; sutler's store 26 x 99 with yard adjoining; building 13 x 100 used as armory; four mechanic shops; barber shop; post-office. Back of these was another ice house. North of the road up Laramie River was a very large garden, and near it were officers' stables and two corrals measuring approximately 170 x 75. East of the first sutler's store was another sutler's store and shed 94 x 69; and north of that, the hospital 32 x 77, with a room 18 x 60 adjoining, and a yard 59 x 71. East of the sutler's store and south of the road up the Platte River were: blacksmith's shop; four company stables 27 x 120 each, around a corral 93 x 120; company stable 33 x 190. A large graveyard was northeast of the road up the Platte River.

Today there are several historic buildings still standing at old Fort Laramie—among them the old Post Traders' Store and Officers' Club Room, frequented by Kit Carson, Jim

Bridger, Jim Baker, St. Vrain and the most noted of army officers.

"Old Bedlam," a building famous in history and fiction, is still there—a large wooden building, the lumber of which was hauled across the plains at an immense cost. The guard house which, by permission of the Government, was used for the imprisonment of notorious desperadoes, stage robbers, etc., in addition to the military prisoners, is still standing.

The old hospital building, which, because of its location on a hill, was the most prominent structure in the fort, is now a very picturesque ruin. The old cavalry barracks, now used as a hotel, store and residence by Joe Wild, is a large and well-preserved structure. There are also the old adobe house (the first building erected there) and the bridge over the Platte River, built by the United States Government and later given to Laramie County.

Mr. and Mrs. John Hunton, who made their home at Fort Laramie for years, can tell most interesting facts about the early days when the fort was a haven for distressed travelers, a rendezvous for trappers and prospectors, a trading post for the Indians and headquarters for troops.

LETTER FROM CASPAR COLLINS

FORT LARAMIE,
Dec. 15th.

DEAR UNCLE:

I have been expecting a letter from you for some time, and am still expecting one. I do not suppose you hunt any now worth speaking of, but if you were here you would have a chance. I went with my father and the Quartermaster-General of the department to open a new road to the other post. We have been back about two weeks. The party killed 8 deer and

an antelope, and I killed a lot of small game, as I had no rifle. I killed thirty of the blue mountain grouse and several prairie chickens, rabbits and squirrels. The squirrels were little red ones, and the rabbits like ours but rather chunkier. The blue grouse is the finest bird I ever saw. It is a little larger than a prairie chicken and about the color of a wild pigeon. They have a bill like a quail and are very much the same shape. The legs and feet are feathered. They have about the habits of the pheasant with us, lighting on trees and concealing themselves in the foliage. They eat the seed in the pine cones, berries, and buds, and some we killed in September had grasshoppers in their craws. They are very hard to find, but are easy to kill. The prairie chickens out here are very different from those in Illinois and Kansas, being smaller and of a lighter color. Their wings are speckled like those of a guinea, and they have white tails. They are better to eat than their cousins farther east. There are said to be pheasants in the Black Hills, but we did not see any, although we were there some time. Cattle can be kept here all winter without feeding them at all. No rain, except a little in May and June, falling in the year, and the grass dries like hay. Mr. Majors, the contractor for the carriage of the corn used by this department, has some 1500 head to winter here. They have not fed the government herd a particle thus far, and yet the beef is so fat that it is unpleasant. There is no game within twenty miles of the fort except ducks, prairie chickens and a few rabbits and hares. The latter now are nearly white except the ears, which are jet black. Wolves are very plenty, being enticed around by the offals of the butcher shops and any animal that may die. They come in the fort at night and howl and quarrel, but I think they do not get very much to eat. There are three kinds of them: two large and one small (coyotes). The hares are about

three times as large as an ordinary rabbit and much longer legged, more like a fox. On Little Laramie, a stream that we crossed and camped on coming back, beaver dams were so thick that one would back water to the falls of the one above it. I followed it for some ten miles, hunting, and with a few exceptions it was that way the entire distance. The country around here, or rather the hills and upland plains, are covered with prickly pear as thick as you ever see ragweed in stubbles with us. It is very hard for a dog to travel over, but does not hurt a horse except when it gets above his hoofs by some accident, when it makes him jump. Antelope travel through it with all ease, and some small animals; prairie dogs and rabbits, for instance, eat it. The prairie dogs are very fine to eat, being no dogs but large squirrels, although I displeased a man very much by telling him that the potpie he had been eating of was made from a bitch and 5 pups. They are shaped like guinea pigs are and red on the back. Mountain sheep are plenty on the topmost crags of the mountains, and are excellent venison, but taste a little more like beef than deer or antelope. Neither they nor antelope have any tails that can be seen. There are plenty of elk, too, but I do not like the meat much. It is like beef, but the tallow sticks to the roof of your mouth. They are nearly as big as the gray horse you ride, and some of them have horns six feet long. There is two kinds of deer—the kind we have, and another kind a little larger, with black short tails instead of white long ones. They are an entirely different species and never intermix in the least. Buffalo are plenty where Vanwinkle's company is, and they have killed a few. Ducks and geese have not left yet, although it is the middle of December. The teal and small ducks have gone, but the mallard, a large gray duck, and a kind called canvasbacks, are still here; both the latter kinds are as large as the

first. The blue grouse is the finest bird or beast of them all to eat, however, being as fine or nearly so as the quail, and better than the pheasant, to my taste, and as far outstripping sage hens or prairie hens as quails do pigeons. There is no woodcock here, but plenty of snipe, plover, curlews and sandpipers. The snipe are like ours, but a little smaller and browner, and they have the same kind of a grunting squeak when they fly up.

Our friend John Callahan has been having a hard time of it lately. He has been post tailor here, and under the command of Captain Thompson, of the 4th Regular Cavalry. He had some trouble with him, and Callahan being rather complaining and upbraiding in his conversation, the captain had the sergeant of the guard take him to the bridge and break the ice and duck him. Then Callahan making a fuss about that, he was ducked the next morning early, and as soon as he changed his clothes was tied to a cannon in the middle of the parade all day, and since that, with several others, has been sweeping the parade with a guard over them. Captain Thompson has now three more of Vanwinkle's men in charge who were sent down here because nothing could be done with them up there, but they are a little scared and very quiet. A lot of Vanwinkle's men will be coming home as soon as there is any chance to send them, as they are unfit for the service, and a lot from other companies are going with them.

Bat Rogers has been crazy, but has got well. The balance are doing very well. Lieut. Glenn and Vananda have had a few little skirmishes with the Indians, but only one of their men was killed. My father says he hopes that nothing will be repeated, as it was not proper for me to write them. I am ever

Your affectionate nephew,

C. W. Collins

LETTER FROM CASPAR COLLINS

FORT LARAMIE, NEB. TERRITORY,
February 23d, 1863.

DEAR MOTHER:

I received a letter from you yesterday. It was nearly two months on the road. The weather has been very fine here this winter, a great deal pleasanter than I ever saw it in Ohio. It is as dull as possible here at the fort. Lieut. Love is now fully recovered and gone up the road to take charge of his company, Captain Hays resigning on account of ill health. You spoke of John Richard having married a squaw. He could not do much better, he being a half-breed himself. Captain Shipley and I were hunting day before yesterday and our horses got away from us, and we nearly came away and lost them. I happened to go on top of a steep bluff and saw them down the river. I am learning the Sioux language. I can talk a little. As a specimen of their short words I will give you their name for peas, "O-me-net-chah-go-me-ga-mah," and other words in proportion. Game is not very plenty around here, but the Indians bring in a good deal of antelope and deer. There are a good many prairie chickens and ducks, but they are so wild that it is next to impossible to kill any of them. Our horses look very finely. My pony is superior to most of those that the Indians have, and indeed she can beat all but one or two for a mile. I have been studying several different books this winter, but I can not now get any more to study at present. I received a letter from Josie, enclosed in one from Aunt Virginia from Sharonville. The letter from Josie was directed to Aunt and sent by her for me to read. I got an excellent lariat from an Indian for a little flour and two loaves of bread. Everyone

you are acquainted with is well. My father has got a slight cold, but is otherwise in excellent health. I got a very large and interesting letter from Dr. Sams yesterday. I was very glad to get it, as I was afraid he was not going to answer any of my letters. I am very sorry to hear that Lud Jones has been suspended at Cambridge. I received in your letter one from Charley Waite. Our surgeon, Dr. Wm. Regner, has gone to the other part of the regiment, and in his place we have an old fellow sent out by General Craig. Shipley's company and Co. H. of the 4th Regular Cavalry give a ball tonight in honor of Washington's birthday. There is only 11 white ladies, including the soldiers' wives, around the fort, and all of them are married. I was yesterday down at a large camp of Cheyennes that had just arrived the day before. There was about two hundred of them. I don't think they are as strong and manly looking Indians as the Sioux, but they have better horses and seemed to look better off in every way in the Indian estimation of wealth. They had a good many elk and buffalo skins which they were dressing, and also a good many of smaller game. I saw a stuffed coon in one of the lodges, which the little girls used as a doll baby. The Sioux name for a coon is "whe-che-ta-ger-la-ga-la-gah." Tell Josie I am very much obliged to her for her note that came in a letter to my father from you. Give my love to Uncle Carleton's family, and tell Uncle I am much obliged to him for his kind letter, and that I will send him a life-size picture and description of the blue grouse as soon as I go to the mountains and have the luck to kill one. Give my respects to Mrs. Hays, as she is now at your house. Believe me, your affectionate son,

C. W. Collins

LETTER FROM MRS. COLLINS

FORT LARAMIE, SUNDAY AFTERNOON,
November 15th, 1863.

DEAR VIRGINIA:

I reached here last night after a fatiguing ride of 65 miles, along the whole of which I did not see a house, and met so warm and cordial a welcome that I forgot my fatigue. I wrote to Josie from St. Louis. I hope she received and answered my letter. The next morning at 4 o'clock I left that place, and have not since then until today had an opportunity of writing a single line. This pen is really bad and this ink is wretchedly pale, but I have so much to say and I know you are all so anxious to hear from me that I must give you at least a part of my story.

Leaving, then, St. Louis at 4 in the morning, we were tumbled about in an omnibus and finally on the sidewalk at the depot of the N. W. Missouri R. R. and, after due shrieks from the engine, launched into the darkness. The conductor, on showing him my ticket, gave me two more which, as it was too dark to read, I put in my pocket without having the faintest conception of what they were for. About daybreak all the passengers made a rush from the cars into a long tunnel-like looking structure, and from that into a ferryboat, and then I found what one ticket was for. It entitled the holder to a passage across the Missouri at the Saint Charles Landing. I would have liked to have looked at the river, but the deck was crowded with rough-looking men, and I was forced to remain seated in the cabin until it was time to make another rush up the other bank and into another train of cars. We passed through quite a pretty varied country, well timbered and well watered, breakfasted about 10 in quite a neat wayside tavern, rushed back to the cars and went thundering along,

passing two forts, some companies of cavalry, some pleasant-looking homes, some dreary-looking stations and a few—very few—pretty villages. At night I saw a prairie on fire, truly a magnificent sight, reached St. Joseph's about 9 o'clock and Atchison at half past one at night—was charged $.75 omnibus fare and suppose, from the way we lumbered through the heavy sand, that amount was fully earned. Went to the Massasoit House, was informed by the host that there was no possible chance of getting a passage in the stage, as it was necessary to engage a passage several days in advance, enquired the breakfast hour, time for stage leaving, etc., had a fire made in the little stove, thawed out, for I was aching with cold, and retired to rest upon the hardest mattress I ever touched. After breakfast Friday morning I walked out to find the stage office, was told it was shut, was determined to see—found a very polite black fellow who was opening it and putting it in order, inquired for the agent—was not up—sent word to him that a lady *must* see him; after waiting half an hour, did see him, was told I could go on payment of $60, but could not take my trunk, could not take it even if I waited for another stage, and was assured that I was very fortunate in getting off myself, as every seat was usually engaged for several days in advance. Rushed back, made some vigorous although ineffectual efforts to get a box or basket or bag to take my 25 lbs. allowed weight, finally locked up my trunk, put it in the agent's care to be forwarded the next Monday, got a receipt on it for the 25 lbs., and took my seat in the stage, which was waiting for me at the door, and into which the porter thrust the buffalo robe. A very pleasant-looking lady with a little girl most astonishingly like Nettie Chase were in the seat where I took my corner; her little son and a very pleasant young man who was going with her to Denver City, two great Irishmen and a red-headed Missourian made up the party.

If this pen were not so aggravating I would write another sheet full—but as it is, I must close for the present.

Your affectionate sister,

CATHARINE

Mrs. Collins was a great favorite among the men who had been away from home so long and who were longing for the familiar faces of the women at home. She was to them a nurse, teacher, comrade, home maker and letter writer.

On February 5, 1864, Mrs. Collins wrote a letter to her daughter Josephine in which she described in a fascinating manner the Indians as follows:

Well! Yesterday morning your father called me out to see the Indians, who were approaching from the west. We went out to the back upper porch, and down in the valley of the Laramie was a confused mass of color and motion amidst which we could occasionally descry a scarlet blanket or headdress of feathers.

They approached with a sort of song and beating on their skin drums; but as they were very slow and confused in their movements, we went into the house until they made their appearance on the parade ground in front. I wished very much you could have seen them, for they presented a very singular and striking spectacle. They arranged themselves in a large circle composed of 8 or 10 musicians, who were men, all wrapped in buffalo robes, but affording glimpses of very peculiar underclothing; the rest of the circle made up of squaws of all ages down to girls of apparently not more than twelve.

In the center were some hideous old women who seemed to have done their very best to make themselves look as ugly as possible, painting their faces with lead color and black and having everything about them as dismal as possible. They were

said to be clowns of the performance. They had branches of trees in their hands, and one or two had rattles made of shot-pouches with long handles, which they shook and, running about in the middle of a circle, seemed to challenge some display of skill or merriment. Then the musicians beat the drums, and the whole circle, standing close together, lifted themselves slightly and shoved round and round, keeping the most exact time to their rude music. They did not raise their feet but very slightly and kept together and revolving about the old women in the middle. All had their faces painted, and most of the young ones had the good taste to use vermilion, which is very becoming to them; but lead color, blue and black stripes and spots of one kind or another all required. One man had his hair painted green. One had a great wolf skin pinned over her head, while another wore a tremendous headdress of wild turkey feathers arranged around a scarlet cowl, and each feather was a scarlet twirl of which they were made I could not tell. All the women danced in their blankets and buffalo robes, but beneath them some had very beautiful dresses made of antelope skin, which is like white kid; and one that I particularly admired had a yoke wrought with beads and a deep fringe like that of a Canton crêpe shawl.

Their dresses fit pretty close to the figure and are not divided like ours into waists and skirts but are more sacque fashion, and they wear felts, sometimes covered with beads or buttons. None of the men except the musicians were in the circle. One of the men had the coat of a lieut. of artillery, which has broad red shoulder straps; another had a jacket with buttons down the seams behind. All wore moccasins and leggins. The latter are generally of cloth and fit ankle and leg.

They kept up their dance, with occasional intervals of jabbering of the old women, for two or three hours, when the officers made up a subscription for them and sent for flour, meat

and rice, and they went away in very good humor. They ought to have had coffee, of which they are very fond.

LETTER FROM CASPAR COLLINS

FORT LARAMIE, IDH. TER.,
Dec. 13th, 1864.

MY DEAR UNCLE CARLETON:

I have received several letters from home lately, and from them I understand that you have been quite unwell but are recovering.

I am now stationed on Sweetwater River, a tributary of the Platte. I have four block stations under my charge. The first is Sweetwater Bridge, the bridge by which the emigrants cross the river on their way to California and Oregon; the second is Three Crossings of Sweetwater; the third, Rocky Ridge; and the fourth is South Pass. I make my headquarters at the first. I was summoned down here on a court-martial and came down in five days, two hundred and twenty miles, by myself most of the way, but I had places to sleep at night.

The weather was awful, but I was well protected and had a horse that would travel eight miles an hour for twelve hours, and I came right through. I rode from Le Bontes Creek (Fort Marshall) to Horse Shoe Station, twenty-five miles in two hours and ten minutes, the thermometer 10 degrees below zero all the time. You bet I hurried.

I went out hunting, up at Sweetwater the other day. I took one man with me and started early in the morning. We traveled all day, and at night we camped on Platte River, thirty miles from where we started. We killed one antelope the first day and made a good supper on him, and then we went to bed. We made our bed under some brush and went to sleep. It commenced snowing, and we woke up and found ourselves covered

with snow so that it felt as if a carload of dirt had been emptied on us. We woke up, and the soldier that was with me thought it was nearly daylight. He took out his watch and tried to light a match, but it nearly smothered us, and we could not lift the blankets, as that would let in a perfect deluge of snow; so I told him to feel with his fingers, and he pronounced it twenty minutes of six.

He had lost his stockings in the night, so I got up and made a fire. It was snowing and blowing all the time, worse than anything ever you saw; and when he got up and brought the watch to the fire, we found it was only twenty minutes of four instead of six, and we had to sit until about seven o'clock before it was light enough to find our horses and pack up and get ready to start. We had a storm on us all the way back, and we didn't stop to hunt. But we had to stop to make fires to keep from freezing.

From my station to the upper one, it is one hundred and four miles, and I have to ride it and back about every two weeks, so it keeps me pretty busy. We have plenty of game up there by riding about 20 or 25 miles for it. There are buffalo, elk, mountain sheep, black-tailed deer and antelope. There is plenty of antelope close by the station, but they have lived so much on sage brush that they taste of it.

This is the form of my headquarters station—Sweetwater Bridge:

1. Block house, 2. Hospital, 3. Telegraph office, 4. Men's cook and dining room, 5. Mine and the doctor's and telegraph operator's mess room, 6. Surgeon's quarters, 7. My own quarters, 8. Commissary and store room with cellar and ice house beneath, 9. Parade ground, 10. Gateway for teams and horses, 11. Small gateway in large gate, for foot passengers, 12. Men's quarters, 13. Passageway, covered, 14. 1st. se'g't's room, 15. Laundry quarters, 16. Telegraph, stable and warehouse, 17.

Granary, 18. Gateway to corral, 19. Mule stables, 20. Company stables, 21. Block house, 22. Mine and the Doctor's stable, 23. Corral or stable yard. It is surrounded by a palisade 15 feet high.

The post was built by Co. D and intended as quarters for forty men. But I have only twenty there now. It is situated on a hill about 50 yards from the Sweetwater River and overlooking the bridge. The second assistant surgeon of the regiment is stationed with me. The next station above is Three Crossings and is situated on the same river forty miles above. It is built in this form:

1. Parade ground, 2. Men's quarters, 3. Telegraph office and quarters of se'g't commanding, 4. Men's quarters, 5. Cook and mess room, 6. Commissary and Q.M. storeroom, 7. Stables, 8. Corral, 9. Gate for horses, 10. Gate for footmen.

It is also surrounded by a palisade, varying from 12 to 15 feet high, and surmounted by a large lookout and block house that sweeps the surrounding country. The next post above, thirty-nine miles, is Rocky Ridge or Saint Mary's. Although it is the depot station of the telegraph company, it is not surrounded by a palisade. But it is a place never visited by Indians, hostile or friendly. Twenty-five miles above is the last military station in the department. It is situated on the same river near a rapid Rocky Mountain stream about the size of Big Rocky Fork and in the center of the renowned South Pass. I made the trip from Sweetwater to South Pass and back in five days—going the first night to Three Crossings; the second, to Rocky Ridge; the third, to South Pass and back to Rocky Ridge; the fourth, back to Three Crossings; and the fifth, home.

Talk of travelers crossing the Alps—I would like them to go over the 25-divide branch of the Wind River Mountains, y-clept Rocky Ridge. I thought I would freeze sure, but I

didn't. I rode over snowdrifts 50 feet deep, packed as hard as ice and just as slippery. The balance of that country on Sweetwater is not much colder than it is in Ohio, but with more wind and less snow. My paper is giving out, so I will close.

Your affectionate nephew,
C. W. Collins

REPORT BY COLONEL COLLINS

Fort Halleck, N. T.,
March 2, 1865.

Gen. James Craig,
Omaha.

Sir:

I have to report that, in accordance with your telegraphic order dated Feb. 23, forty-three enlisted men of Co. C, 1st Ind. Bat. O.V.C., under the command of 1st Lieutenant Thomas P. Clark and 2nd Lieut. John G. Reeves of said company, left Ft. Laramie for the relief of Ft. Halleck.

I followed the next morning with five men of Company A and Serg't Apt. of Co. D, and overtook the first party the next day, Feb. 26. We took the direct route and, although we found some snow in the mountains and it was intensely cold, no serious obstacle was encountered until we reached Rock Creek the night of the 27th, where we encamped.

It had stormed more or less for two days, and on the third day (Feb. 28) a few hours after leaving camp a terrific storm came on which lasted all day and into the night. The air was so filled with snow that it was often impossible to see ten yards in any direction. Impassible drifts were constantly met. And any track was obliterated in a very few minutes. The leading party, consisting of about thirty men, pushed on toward the fort, following the direction as near as could be ascertained. When

within about eight miles of the fort, some of the men became so much benumbed and were so anxious to stop and build a fire to warm themselves that their entreaties were yielded to. About ten men stopped and I remained with them, Lieutenants Clark and Reeves going forward with the main party. Finding it impossible to kindle a fire on account of the violence of the wind, after a delay of about half an hour the march was resumed. When within about two miles of the fort, Private Frank W. Courtwright, of Co. C, fell from his horse. We halted and on examination found him too benumbed to sit on his horse or even to stand. All the men except four pushed on to the fort to save themselves and to obtain help.

Private James Hancher, of Company C, and myself remained with Courtright and Private Joseph Hudnell, who was failing very fast. He could sit upon his horse by holding to the mane, but could not guide him. I was also getting very weak and useless, and we determined to go forward and save Hudnell if possible and to send back for Courtright. We went on very rapidly and soon reached the fort and dispatched a wagon for Courtright. He was brought in in a very short time, but could not be saved. He died in about fifteen minutes after his arrival. Hudnell is badly frosted but will recover. I found also when I dismounted that I could not walk without help. I had suffered no pain from the cold for half an hour previous, but had felt weak and drowsy. The surgeon tells me that in half an hour I should have been past help. I had no feeling until being rubbed with snow for some time, when I began to suffer intensely. The thumbs and fingers of both hands were found to be frozen. And also my ears, eyelids and nose, the latter slightly. I cannot yet use my hands or eyes, but the surgeon assures me that they will recover. I give my case in detail because it is the experience of many others connected with the command. We found that the leading party

had arrived about three-fourths of an hour before us. Corporal John Griffith, of Co. C, had given out a short time before reaching the fort. They had brought him in and were using every means for his restoration, but he died in about half an hour. There were very few of the men that were not more or less frozen. Indeed, I know of no one who entirely escaped. Lieut. Clark was frostbitten slightly in fingers and ears; Lieut. Reeves, quite severely in hands, chin and ears.

The sutler store was turned into a hospital. The surgeon, Holladay, was in attendance, plenty of assistance at hand, and every effort made to recover those afflicted and alleviate the suffering. Messrs. Jones and Mills and others connected with the sutler's establishment were especially active. No other deaths occurred. But there were at least eight or ten who could not have survived another hour's exposure to the storm. The rear guard with the wagons fared better. The wagons were literally snowed up and could go no further through the drifts. They encamped and, having the blankets and rations of the entire command, were able to protect themselves better. They came in yesterday, bringing the horses and most of the mules, but leaving the wagons, which will be sent for. They were all more or less frosted, but only one very seriously. Not more than one-half of the command are fit for duty at present. They will all probably become so. It is difficult to form an idea of the violence of the storm at the time. One could scarcely stand or sit a horse, and the snow, moving horizontally, struck the face like shot, perfectly blinding the eyes of those who faced it as we were compelled to do. It was evidently the violence of the wind that chilled so rapidly.

The conduct of the men was admirable without exception. All were active and willing to help one another and make the best of the situation.

Griffith and Courtright were both young men and unmar-

ried, natives of Fairfield Co., Ohio, belonging to respectable families, still residents there. They were worthy men and good soldiers, and Griffith was especially intelligent and faithful in the discharge of duties as a noncommissioned officer. Their death should be held none the less honorable than if they had fallen in battle.

In conclusion I have only to add that, unfortunate as these results are, it is truly remarkable, considering the circumstances, that they were not far more disastrous.

I am, very respectfully,

WM. O. COLLINS, Lieut. Col. Commanding
1st. Ind. Bat. O. V. C.

THE INDIAN TRIBES

Colonel Collins and Caspar made an intensive study of the various Indian tribes in the western country where they were situated. Evidence of the thoroughness of their observations is contained in the letter which Colonel Collins wrote shortly after his return home to Ohio, in which he said:

May 12, 1865.

HON. WILLIAM P. DALE,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs,
Washington City.

Indians north and south of the Platte River, from Ft. Kearney westward, and who in their wanderings cross that stream. Principally of three tribes: the Sioux, Cheyennes and Arapahoes.

I. Country properly belonging to the Sioux is bounded south by the main and North Platte River and east by a line from the Red Buttes near the mouth of Sweetwater River, northerly to Powder River and the Yellowstone. The country

of the Snake and Crow is directly west of them, and that of the Cheyenne and Arapahoes directly south. These lines are very little regarded, however, as the Sioux often pass over into the Snake and Crow country, with whom they are always at war; and for many years the Sioux, Cheyennes and Arapahoes have mutually invited each other to visit and hunt in their respective territories. Their friendship is also constantly strengthening by intermarriages, which are becoming quite common, especially between the Sioux and Cheyennes.

These Indians are all nomadic, having no permanent villages, and changing their locality as necessity or convenience may require. The principal tribes of Sioux that range nearest the Platte are:

1st. The Ogallalahs or Badfaces, consisting of about 500 lodges. Of these about 150 lodges have been most of the time for eight or ten years south of the Platte with the Cheyennes, generally on the waters of the Republican and Arkansas Rivers. They have recently become hostile and have been engaged in murders and depredations along the main and North Platte. Their warriors were in the battles of Mud Springs and Rush Creek with the 11th Ohio Cavalry Volunteers in February last, and together with the other hostile Indians from the south were driven off towards Powder River, where they now are. The remainder of the Ogallalahs are along and north of the North Platte, the largest band being on the headwaters of the Powder River, about eighty miles north of Platte Bridge. The principal chief of this band is Tahshunkah-ko-ke-pah, or the Man Afraid of His Horses. This chief is prudent and sensible, and has always been, and I think still is, friendly to the whites. He does all in his power to restrain his people, but complains that some of his young men are bad.

2nd. The Brûlés or Burnt Thighs (See-Chongo). There are about 350 lodges of this band, of which about 175 lodges

have been for some years south with the Cheyennes in the same section as the Ogallalahs and, though formerly friendly, are now all hostile and were driven north towards Powder River with the Ogallalahs and Cheyennes after the battles of Mud Springs and Rush Creek. Of this band Little Thunder and Spotted Tail are the principal chiefs. The other Brûlés are in small bands along and north of the North Platte, and have been hitherto, and probably most of them are still, friendly. Especially the Corn band, of which Standing Elk and Swift Bear are the chiefs. I have full confidence in both of them. They usually range along the Platte below Ft. Laramie and thence north to L'Eau qui Court, or Running Water, and the head of White River.

3rd. The Minne Kongues (those who farm close to the water) with about 350 lodges. They all stay north of the Platte, generally low down on Powder River or on the headwaters of Belle Fourche (North Fork of Cheyenne) or on the Little Missouri of the Mandan. They are all hostile except about fifty lodges of which Lone Horn is chief, and they are now doubtful.

The other bands of Sioux, such as the Sanjerk, Santees, Yanktons, Yantonnuis, Unkpapa, etc., are further north and east and rarely come to the Platte River except in small stealing parties. These, however, have been quite common during the last two years.

II. The Cheyennes number about 500 lodges. Of these about 350 lodges have generally remained south, ranging from the Platte to the Arkansas, and from the base of the Black Hills to near the center of Kansas and Nebraska. Most of them went north towards Powder River after the Mud Springs and Rush Creek fights, where they probably now are. The balance of the tribe has been for some time on the . . . of the Powder River about 100 miles north of Deer Creek. About 100 lodges

under the chief Gray Head are reported friendly. The chief is certainly so, and is both sensible and reliable. The others, consisting of about eighty lodges, have been for some time hostile.

III. The Arapahoe. Their country is south of the Sioux and west of the Cheyennes, but part of them have been in the habit of crossing the North Platte after buffalo, and about 100 lodges of them spent the last winter on the head of Dry Creek and Powder River under the Big Horn Mountains. All the Arapahoe have hitherto been friendly, and most of them may be expected to continue so unless something occurs to disturb them. Their principal chiefs are Medicine Man, White Bull, Little Shield and Black Bear. The remainder of the tribe stay generally in small bands on the waters of the South Platte and Arkansas Rivers, and have come very little under my notice. It is proper to remark that almost all the Indians are just now liable to become hostile. The rush of emigrants through their country in search of gold is immense, and their game is being rapidly destroyed or frightened away; the whites who come in contact with them generally know nothing of Indian habits or character and often do them injustice; and then they complain that the treaty promises of the Government are not kept. War with somebody is also the natural state of an Indian people. Every tribe has some hereditary enemies with whom it is always at war and against whom it makes regular expeditions to get scalps and steal ponies. Thus the Sioux are always at war with the Snakes, Crows, Omahas and Pawnees; the Arapahoe with the Utes, etc. To heal these difficulties perfectly is impossible, as there is always some wrong unavenged. It is by war that they obtain wealth, position and influence with the tribe. The young men especially look up to and follow the successful warrior rather than the wise and prudent chiefs. The southern hostile Indians who have gone

north will also exercise a bad influence by their tales of real or pretended wrongs, and it may be that many of those who have hitherto been friendly may be persuaded or forced into war with the whites.

The statements contained in this paper are based on personal observation and information obtained during the last three years while in command of the 11th. O.V.C. and other troops in the mountains and are probably correct in all important details. It is very difficult, however, to be perfectly accurate in Indian matters, and conflicting views and opinions are to be expected. Having left Ft. Laramie early in March last, I cannot speak as to any change which may have since occurred.

William O. Collins

LETTER FROM CASPAR COLLINS

Sweetwater Bridge,
April 15, 1865.

Dear Mother:

I received your letter speaking of Capt. Rhinehart's death, a few days since. It is too true; he was killed by the Cheyenne Indians on La Prelle Creek, near Deer Creek Station, in February last. You have no doubt had full particulars before this.

There is now a very large number of troops on the road coming out here. The 11th Kansas is between here and Fort Laramie. We have this post well defended. I had the men at work for several weeks, and it is now invulnerable to the *noble* aborigines of this section. Twenty-six men are stationed here. Gen. Connor, of California, is now in command of this department. One of the men belonging to this post was killed about the middle of March, between here and Platte Bridge—Philip Roads, son of Henry S. Roads, of Paint Township, Highland

County. He and another man were coming up with a load of rations with a four-mule team. The escort that was with them, having passed what the commander of the squad thought the dangerous part of the ground, turned back. Four Indians, who claimed to be Arapahoes, came up to the wagon and commenced talking with them. The Indians suddenly fired in concert, and killed him instantly and, strange to say, the other boy escaped with nothing but a ball or arrow hole through his blouse. He seized a gun and kept the Indians at bay for the balance of the afternoon. As he had two Spencer rifles, the Indians kept on the brow of the hill and contented themselves with firing from a safe position, filling the wagon body full of bullet holes. At dark he saddled the horse that was with the team and struck for the post, thirty miles distant, under cover of the night. He arrived here a little after midnight, when we started in pursuit. It was so intensely cold that we had to walk much of the way. We arrived at the scene of action about daylight, but the Indians had fled, after stripping the dead man and wagon and loading the mules with plunder. We followed the trail until a windstorm came on and obscured it entirely. I do not think I ever suffered so much with the cold in my life. Two of the men were so nearly frozen that we had to take them off their horses, leaving only two of us for duty.

The weather at this post is excellent at present; but above here, at South Pass, which is also under my command, two men froze lately, though not very seriously. I have just returned from that abominable section of country. Dr. Rich and I went up together. We were two days getting twenty-five miles, and then had to leave our horses on account of the snow and walk in. I frosted my feet sleeping out, but they were about well when I went hunting yesterday and blistered the old places again, so I am a little lame today.

Tourists need not go to the Alps or Greenland to see snow.

Let them come to South Pass and patronize home institutions. I think I could guide them through that section. There are places there where the snow is ten feet deep for miles, the crust hardly bearing a man. The lowest point in the pass is about eight thousand feet above the sea; and about twenty miles off, but appearing as if close at hand, are the Wind River Mountains, hiding their heads in the clouds. The pass has never been impassible for the same length of time. It closed up about the middle of October, and no sign of thaw yet, all the snow that has fallen during the winter being still on the ground. There are drifts in the cañons on the Sweetwater, below the station, sixty or seventy feet deep. The doctor and I had only our saddle blankets, so we did not sleep extra comfortable. I prepared a pictorial picture of the trip, but the Doctor was so taken with it that he carried it off with him. He got well paid for his trip, getting a hundred dollars in gold dust from a miner there for cutting off his toes.

I suppose you have heard of the fight[1] father had with the Indians. It was the largest Indian battle, and fought at the greatest odds, of any ever fought in this country. It has turned out that he killed a great many more than were reported, as the Indians themselves own to fifty or more dying of their wounds, which makes about two hundred placed *hors du combat* by a little more than half that number of the "terrible Eleventh," with a loss of only two killed and fifteen or so wounded. Two of the wounded have since died.

We expect more troops at the post in a few days, as they are now at Deer Creek. The object of Gen. Connor is to keep the Indians north until the Platte, Sweetwater and other rivers are past fording, when I think the intention is to exterminate them.

We are all much rejoiced to hear of Lee's surrender, but

[1] Battle of Mud Springs.

our spirits were thrown into a deep gloom today by the receipt of the intelligence of the assassination of our beloved President. The country will find it difficult to replace its loss. I would write oftener, but it is almost impossible to get letters from here to Fort Laramie, the road being unsafe for mail carriers, and large bodies of men cannot be spared from the posts on this road.

I have written twice since New Year's but, as you did not get them, I suppose they miscarried. I have received four letters from you this month, some of them rather old. I will think of the contents of your last letter, but I do not wish to say anything I do not feel. Hoping this will reach you safely, I remain

Your affectionate son,
C. W. Collins

P. S. If anything happens to me, I will telegraph.
C. W. C.

LETTER FROM CASPAR COLLINS

Sweetwater Bridge,
April 18th, 1865.

My Dear Aunt:

I have been shut up this winter in one of the most desolate regions on the American continent. I think this is the natural penitentiary of the United States. I have four posts under my jurisdiction, about forty miles apart, on an average. The only way I had of hearing from abroad was the telegraph, and the news on it, owing to detentions and press of business, have been very slim. No news is sent over except the most important, and that is condensed so as to be almost unintelligible.

I had a recess of about 2 months while the court-martial was sitting at Fort Laramie. I went down in the middle of De-

cember and returned the month following. I can not think of anything interesting in the midst of this desert. That is one reason I have been so remiss in writing. Besides, the mail has been very irregular owing to the Indian hostilities. I think, however, that will soon be over with, owing to the large number of troops on the way out. My main employments at present are sleeping, eating and hunting geese, ducks and snipe. I had a visit this winter from a party of Arapahoes, a friendly tribe if they can make anything by it. Every day or two the chief would send in reports from the hostile tribes and then ask for "grub," old clothes, etc., and want to trade for my horse or steal him—either, I think. I refused successively one, two and three ponies from him. I took good care that none of them got hold of old Woodpecker, by giving the guard special instructions and buying a large and strong padlock.

The Arapahoes are a small tribe, but they are the finest looking Indians on the plains. They hardly ever open their mouths except to eat, but do all their talking by signs. I had presents of moccasins, etc, offered by them continually, which I took good care not to accept, as they expect presents in return, and like their presents to be rather valuable. They smoked nearly all my tobacco up having "big talks." I got at last so when I would see the chief and his bodyguard on the road I would get on my horse and take revenge on the innocent and unoffending geese and ducks.

The Sweetwater River can't boast of any fish but suckers of the boniest description, which the boys sometimes catch and try to eat and are coughing the bones out of their throats the week following. Our Indian friends scared off all the large game, but we killed a few buffalo, deer and antelope during the winter. The company now is nearly all mounted on Indian horses, which are the laziest things on earth unless it is their Indian masters. They have two good traits: one is being able to live

on sage brush, almost the only product of the soil in this country; and the other, that they can travel on a slow lope for almost incredible distances. I will have plenty of company here day after tomorrow, for several companies are coming here to stay a few months. The weather at this post is not much colder than in Ohio, but is a great deal dryer and windier; but at the posts above, it excels anything spoken of in Dr. Kane's journal. I have to go up in that part of the country to make inspections once a month, and have the privilege of going often extra as I may desire. That permission I make little use of, however. If you have succeeded in reading this, answer as soon as possible, and send as much gossip as possible, as it is more interesting than anything else out here. Give my love to all.

Your affectionate nephew,

C. W. Collins

INDIAN CUSTOMS AND LEGENDS

Caspar Collins was a student of Indian customs and language, and listened by the hour to the legends told by the old chiefs. In his boyish handwriting he jotted down notes relative to the things which he observed and heard. In detail he described the Hot Baths Used by the Indians; The Societies of the Indians; and The Manner in Which the Sioux Became Divided into Twelve Tribes.

HOT BATHS USED BY THE INDIANS

A lot of stones are heated out of doors, in a fire. They are selected for their smoothness and hardness. A lodge is made by bending willows or other sticks so as to form a small lodge about 4 feet high and 6 or 7 feet across, and a hole is dug in the centre of the lodge, and the stones, heated red hot, are

placed in it. The frame is covered with lodge skins or robes or blankets so as to keep in the heat. As many Indians as can get in it do so. They take in a bucket of water and pour a little at a time on the stones, so as to keep up a steam. They stay in as long as the stones retain their heat. When they are in, they have a head of a buffalo bull painted black facing the mouth of the lodge. They address all manner of prayers and incantations to the Great Spirit through it; and among them, prayers for their welfare predominate. When they are through, they throw off the covering of the lodge and throw themselves into the nearest stream, even in the dead of winter. The heat is so great in these houses that the breath causes blisters. The Arapahoes are particularly addicted to the use of these sweat houses. Sore eyes and blindness are more common than in any other Indians, and by many it is attributed to the use of these steam baths.

THE MANNER IN WHICH THE SIOUX BECAME DIVIDED INTO TWELVE TRIBES

In the first place the Sioux were a single nation. They were then on the Missouri, near its junction with the Mississippi. When the whites began to settle that country, they moved up towards the head of the latter, and there began making war against the Cheyennes. The latter, being small in numbers, were driven westward to the head of the Missouri on Powder River and the North Platte. In the meantime they had to fight the nations ahead of them to get away from the Sioux. They had to fight the Crows, Kiowas, Arapahoes, Pawnees and Comanches, and by that means got horses.

The Sioux and Cheyennes took a great many prisoners, one from another, and by that means they learned the languages of one another. The Sioux and Cheyennes both used dogs at

that time and had no horses. Some of the Sioux prisoners, getting away, bore news to their people that the Cheyennes were willing to make peace. The Sioux sent emissaries that they were willing to make peace on certain grounds, which the Cheyennes agreed to.

The first peace was made on Powder River or, as it is sometimes called, Cheyenne River. At that time the Sioux were governed by one chief, whose will was law. During the deliberations the children of the Sioux, playing about, made so much noise that they disturbed the chief. He ordered all of them away until the deliberations were over—some ten or fifteen miles. They were accordingly removed there. After their parents had taken them and returned, it was nightfall. One of the Sioux young men ran off with a Cheyenne woman, the wife of one of the tribe. That broke up the council, the Cheyenne making a great outcry and demanding his wife back. The Sioux resisted and the chief, to prevent bloodshed, ordered the lodges to be taken down and the village to move. The Cheyenne chief did the same. They moved a long distance in contrary directions, each fearing an attack from the other. The children that were left, finding the time long, started for the camp. Those that reached the camp and found it was moved were frightened and told the others; then they started on the trail to overtake them.

Their relations had left them a good lot of provisions in the trees, and also lodge skins, intending to come back after them. They mistook the trail and followed the Cheyennes. They did not find out their mistake until they were nearly on the camp, when they got frightened and returned. In the meantime the old people returned for them and found them gone. After searching diligently for them, they concluded that the Cheyennes had wiped them out and gave up the search in despair. When the children returned to the village, they concluded to

remain there. They collected pieces of lodge skins—enough with what they had to make them tents—and the older ones, still having their small bows and arrows, killed small game, such as rabbits, birds, etc. They kept moving around hunting small game until some of them got large enough to get married to one another. Some of them went to war and stole horses, and with them they could kill buffalo and feed and dress themselves and also had skins enough to make more commodious lodges. They kept moving, following the buffalo. They made the oldest one chief.

They moved north for one moon. It was then fifteen winters after their separation from their friends. One time they discovered a large village ahead of them. There was only about forty lodges of themselves, and they were afraid. The chief ordered them to encamp in some timber, and he sent out spies. They found out that they spoke Sioux.

The other party in the meantime discovered them, and also sent out scouts. It was the people from whom they had separated. Their old chief ordered his warriors to mount and to charge down on them. When they came near, they also discovered that they spoke Sioux. The old chief ordered them to come to the camp, for he said they must be their lost children. The young chief answered that he had left them in the prairie at the mercy of wild beasts and other tribes and that they had built up a village of their own and they would never return until he was dead.

The old chief then ordered his warriors to attack them and wipe them out, but no one would answer his call except his own relations. His name was Yellow Horse, and he always rode an animal of that color. He, being very angry, mounted him and was recognized by the children. Their intention was to kill him. The young chief rode out to attack him with arrows. The old fellow said to him: "Here I am, still the Yellow Horse."

The old chief was armed with a lance, but before he reached the young man in his charge, he was transfixed by him with an arrow and died immediately.

After the old chief was slain, his relations fled and were pursued by the young ones to the village. When they reached the village, their friends came to them and presented the pipe and begged of them not to fire on their mothers. They explained to them the mystery of the pipe, and said, as the old chief was dead, no impediment was in the way for a reunion. The young ones agreed. Their relations wanted to make the young man the chief, but the relations of the old one were for his next oldest brother. They could not agree and got in quarrels and divided, each family by itself. Each party elected their own chief.

The whole country was open to them, all the old inhabitants being driven away. The tribe called the Minnekorhues were the first to meet with the Cheyennes. They made peace with the Cheyennes and intermarried with them. The names of the different bands are as follows: The Brûlés or, as the English is, the burnt thigh, so called because they ran through the burning prairie. The Indian name, Sheeskongo. The first name is French. The Minne Kongues, those who farm by the water. Ogalalas, or sad faces, because they were not pleased when they started. The Yocapes, or broken arrows. Tosapa Enecha (French, Sonsac, or no bows.) Unpapas, two kettle band. Blackfeet band. The band that don't eat dogs. The band that stays in the pines, and the Yanktons.

The Ogalalas are a band of the Sioux. The Bad Faces come from the Ogalalas. The Ogalalas got the name of the bad faces from their quarrelsome disposition, and because they quarreled with their own nation. Bad face is in the Sioux tongue E-ta-chetz-a. The Kiucksa is another band, and the meaning of it is, the one that bites the snake in two. The Wagasohas are a

band of the Brûlés. There is the Coolaweeshasha, the band that lives away from the rest, another band of the Brûlés. The Yocapes means the poor people, or those that travel in bad style.

The Sonsacs got the name of no bows on account of a crazy man who imagined he was a woman and threw his bow away. When in a battle a young Indian shows the white feather, the others say to him to go and live with the Sonsacs.

Shontantiohne, or band that don't eat dogs, got its name from an old chief that prohibited the use of canine flesh in his camp.

Unpapas are a tribe of the Minne Kongues, and their name means those that camp in a circle.

Ohen-a-as, or the two-kettle band, are the ones that put meat in two kettles.

The Se-as-sa-pa, or Blackfeet band, so called because they wear black moccasins. There is a band on the Upper Missouri called the Red Waters, or Minne-shaw. The Cheeahokas also live there, but the meaning of it does not bear repetition.

The above was given by the White Medicine Man, a one-eyed old Indian, or Wishecawakha, as his Indian name is called, or some call Yo-ca-la, or the man horse in the root.

A large body of the Sioux, composed of the Minne Kongues, Unpapas and Blackfeet, gave the pipe to one another to go to war against the Crows. They moved toward the Crows with their horses, lodges, families and everything until they reached Powder River. The next morning they intended to attack the Crows, so they camped for the night.

In the morning, one of the first things when they got up, they discovered a large band of buffalo near the village. All the men then started after the buffalo and left the women, children and old men in the village with some slight fortifications around them. After they had got some slight distance away,

the Crows, having discovered the village, charged on it and massacred nearly everyone that was left behind. About that time the men returned, but the Crows had killed nearly everybody and were carrying off three women prisoners. The Sioux left their horses, as they were fatigued with running the buffalo, and charged on foot. One of the women was the daughter of the chief Red Fish. The horses of the Crows, being fresh, left the Sioux far behind. That night one of the women escaped and returned; a strong guard being kept over the others, they could not get away, and they were taken to the Crow village. Two old Crows, who had been celebrated braves but were then superannuated, came out to kill the women, but the young man who took them prisoners told them not to kill them and he would give them to the old fellows for wives. So the old fellows embraced the young man and thanked the Great Spirit and took the women.

The brother of the chief's daughter was killed in the battle. He was only a small boy. And every time she would see her brother's scalp she would cry, and the Crows asked her what she was crying about. She told them it was her brother's scalp. Then when they were dancing with the scalps they made her hold it in her hand and dance with them. At night they would have an Indian to sleep across the door of the tent so she could not escape.

One night the old man was called to a council and his old wife, a Crow, was jealous of the young one. So she, when nobody was watching her, fixed moccasins and meat, and when the old man was in the council she woke up the young woman and said: "Take this and go to your people. Don't delay. This is your time." The young woman then started; she thought maybe it was a catch to kill her for trying to run away, but she thought, as it was so dark, they could not find her. To get out she pulled up the pickets in the back part of the lodge so

as not to wake the sentinel. Instead of going straight toward her people, she traveled two days in the opposite direction, sleeping in the day and traveling at night.

When the old man came into the lodge, he found out that she was gone, and all the village started to hunt her up. At the end of the two nights' traveling she turned and made a circuit around the village and, after traveling four nights back, she found herself on a big mountain and hid under a fallen tree, and she saw the Indians hunting for her. Some ten or fifteen of them came up on the mountain and sat down some twenty yards off and began to smoke. After they left she came out and saw them traveling a long ways off, going toward the village. They had given her up. She then started and got to Powder River. The river was up over the banks. She cut her robe up and made a light raft that she could handle and got across. After she got across she traveled a little while and her dress got so hard, being made of leather, that she had to throw it away; and her moccasins and meat gave out too, she having traveled twenty days. She lived then on the *pomme blanche*, a root a little like a very small turnip, and on rose buds, and continued traveling until she saw her own people.

She did not like to go into the village naked as she was, and so she stood on a hill a distance off. She heard a noise behind her, and she turned and looked, and it was a young man coming up behind her galloping. She shouted to him not to come near, as she was naked. He then asked her who she was. She told him. He then went into the village and told her relatives, and her mother came and brought her clothes. The old woman was so rejoiced that she gave everything she had—horse, lodges, dogs—everything, to the poor and then fell sick and died. Her father was not at home, having taken the pipe to the other nations around to go to war and get the daughter back, and he came to the treaty with the whites and there he

saw a priest, or black robes as they call them. He thought the priest had supernatural powers and used to beg of him every day to bring his daughter back. The priest got tired of him, and to get rid of him told him to go to his village and he would find his daughter there. So the old fellow took him at his word and started home and found his daughter. Now at all his feasts and councils instead of praying to the Great Spirit he prays to the White Medicine Man with the black robe. The young woman was very unwilling to go back to her former husband among the tribe, because he did not go to war to rescue her. But her father arranged it. She had a boy which they called the Crow, that she stole, and says she took him in the place of her brother which the Crows stole. She is alive and well and rich among her people.

THE SOCIETIES OF THE INDIANS

The Mandan Society is one of the principal ones; it was taken from the Mandan Indians. Any man that joins that society must have a character above reproach, among his people, and must be kind to his family and brave.

When they join the society the rules are repeated to them. They say to them, You must be always faithful to your people, kind to your family and benevolent to the poor. It you have any trouble with your wives, you must come here when we are in council and repeat it to us and we will try to settle it. You must never whip them; but if there is sufficient cause, we will divorce you from them by striking three times on this drum and repeating the cause to your relatives. When there is any trouble in the village or with other Indians or with the whites or with anyone, you must be prepared to help.

APPENDIX

COLLINS ANCESTORS

Two hundred and ten years before Caspar Collins was born, or in 1634, Edward Collins, of England, brought his wife to America and settled at Cambridge, Massachusetts. For fifteen years he was a member of the Colonial Court and held many offices of trust and importance, being active in all affairs of the church and state, and becoming a Free Mason in 1638. In 1689 he died, leaving four sons and several daughters, some of whom were born in England.

One of his sons, Nathaniel, who was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, March 7, 1643, was graduated from Harvard College in 1660 and settled as the first minister at Middletown, Connecticut, on November 4, 1668, where he lived until he died on December 28, 1684.

Nathaniel, Jr., son of the Rev. Nathaniel Collins, was born at Middletown, Connecticut, in 1669. He married Alice Adams, daughter of the Rev. William Adams, of Dedham, Massachusetts, and granddaughter of William Bradford, second governor of Plymouth Colony, who came to America in the Mayflower. Nathaniel graduated from Harvard and settled as the first minister in Enfield, Connecticut, where he remained until his death in 1756. He left a large family of sons and daughters.

One of the sons, William, who was the great-great-grandfather of Caspar W. Collins, was born in Enfield, Connecticut, on a farm which was owned and occupied by their descendants for about 160 years. William Collins lived to the age of ninety-three.

Jabez, the son of William and Anne Collins, who was born December 11, 1744, married Mary Gleason, of Enfield, and was eminent in town and church affairs, being a deacon for many years, a representative in the general assembly and town clerk, and held public office until eighty-five years of age. Serving in the French and Indian War, he was at Crown Point and Ticonderoga and was always a valiant soldier. When the Revolutionary War began, he and many others were drafted for service and sent from Somers,

Connecticut, to Lexington. Jabez Collins died when he was ninety-five years old.

His son, Oliver, born in Somers, Connecticut, March 26, 1781, married Mary Chapin, daughter of Cornet Noah Chapin, a direct descendant of Deacon Samuel Chapin, one of the earliest settlers of Springfield, Massachusetts. Oliver Collins became a commissioned officer during the war with England in 1812 and received the title of colonel. He later became a representative in the state legislature and ably filled various offices in the town and county. He died when he was eighty-eight years old, leaving four sons—Edwin Williams, born August 11, 1806; William Oliver, born August 23, 1809; Noah Chapin, born September 7, 1814; and Jabez, born December 20, 1818.

CAMP COLLINS

ORIGINAL ORDER ISSUED BY COLONEL COLLINS

Hd. Qrs. 11th O.V.C. in the Field at Camp Collins, Col. Ter.,
Aug. 20th, 1864.

Special Order No. 1:

The importance of a permanent Post on the Cache la Poudre River near its outlet from the mountains in the vicinity of the junction of the mail line from Denver and the Overland Mail Route, and about the line between the Mts. Arapahoes and Cheyennes makes it proper and necessary to change the location of Camp Collins to some point near, which will afford more space for improvement, be free from overflow by high waters, and the interference and injury to discipline from lot-holders in the town of La Porte and the settlers and claimants of land in the immediate neighborhood.

The following ground now unoccupied, uninclosed and unimproved and with no known claimants thereto is therefore taken and appropriated for military purpose. And no citizen will be permitted to settle upon, occupy or in any manner encroach on the same, for any purpose whatever, without lease from proper military authorities, to wit: Beginning in the centre of the main channel of the Cache la Poudre River, where the east line of the claim of Joseph Mason, on which he now lives, crosses the same, thence south four miles, thence east four miles, thence north about four miles to the centre of the main channel of the Cache la Poudre River, thence with the centre of said river up the main channel thereof, following its meanderings to the place of beginning.

APPENDIX

Captain Evans, Co. F, now commanding Camp Collins, or whoever may succeed him in command of that Post, will proceed immediately to construct Company Quarters for two companies, and for officers of the same, and for a temporary Hospital. And also, corells or stables and other necessary buildings and conveniences for two companies, upon the plan and according to the plat hereto attached—leaving the ground on the Parade, and in the vicinity of the Post, so that it can be built upon and improved for the accommodation of more troops or stock, if necessary, and as soon as is consistent with the good of the Service. He will remove Camp Collins to the site herein designated, with all troops, stock, stores and Government property, including the buildings erected by the U. S. troops or at Government expense if the same can be properly employed for constructing the buildings at said new camp.

Wm. O. Collins, Lt. Col. Comdg.
11th Regt., O.V.C., and troops
on Overland Mail and Telegraph
line in the District of Nebraska
west of Interburgh.

This order was carried out immediately, and the transfer was completed in October. Camp Collins, or Fort Collins, then consisted of: two company quarters 20 x 40 each, orderly's room 10 x 20, kitchen 18 x 60, guardhouse 20 x 20, two company stables 150 x 24 each, two officers' quarters 18 x 18 each, kitchen 15 x 36, yard 17 x 36, sink, flagstaff, parade ground 300 x 300; on the west side of the parade, kitchen 60 x 18, two commissaries' and quartermaster's rooms 10 x 18 each, two company quarters 40 x 20 each, orderly's room 10 x20, quartermaster's rooms 40 x 20 and 20 x 20, two officers' quarters 18 x 18 each, kitchen 15 x 36 and yard 17 x 36, sink, hospital 40 x 20 (consisting of kitchen, ward, surgery and yard), four laundresses' quarters 18 x 15 each, sutler's room.

Casper, Wyoming. The heart of the town of Casper, Natrona County, Wyoming, is about two miles from the old Platte Bridge, of which little trace now remains. The town itself is growing rapidly, on account of the rich ranching country near by and the tremendous development in the oil fields in that vicinity. The city was named for the young lieutenant, and the name was originally spelled "Caspar"; but, according to the old-timers, the spelling became changed through a mistake made in the Post Office Department in Washington. Another theory, too, is that the people generally misspelled the name until the established spelling became "Casper" instead of "Caspar."

Casper Creek. Casper Creek is a large creek with north and south branches which flows into the North Platte River about one mile west of the city of Casper.

Casper Mountain. Casper Mountain is a large hill just south of the city of Casper.

Casper W. Collins Post, No. 58, G.A.R., Rawlins, Wyoming. A Grand Army post was mustered in on October 13, 1884, at Rawlins, Wyoming, bearing the name of Lieutenant Collins. The post started with eighteen members, commanded by John C. Friend. The records of the post show that the name was chosen "in honor and to perpetuate the name of Lieutenant Collins, who so gallantly yielded up his young life in the fight at Platte Bridge with the Indians, July 26, 1865, in attempting to relieve and bring from the field a wounded comrade."

Ft. Caspar Chapter, D.A.R., Casper, Wyoming. On May 28, 1914, a chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution was installed at Casper and adopted the name of "Ft. Caspar Chapter."

Poems. Two poems have been written about Caspar Collins. One poem of fourteen verses is entitled "An O'er True Legend of Indian Warfare, by W. H. T. Shade, a tramp printer from Iowa City, Iowa." This poem was published on October 5, 1885, at Navasota, Texas. The other poem, written by I. S. Bartlett, of Cheyenne, Wyoming, won first prize at a contest held under the management of the State Industrial Convention at Casper, Wyoming, in September, 1905.

COLLINS RELICS

Before her death, Mrs. Collins donated to the Agricultural College Library at Fort Collins, Colorado, a number of the possessions of her husband. One of the relics, a genuine peace pipe, is made of sacred pipestone and was once the property of Lone Horn, head chief of the Minne Kongue nation on the Upper Missouri River. Probably the most important gifts were the maps made by Caspar Collins and his father during their reconnaissance work in Colorado and Wyoming, formerly Dakota and Nebraska Territories. These maps show the trails, roads, rivers, mountains, fords and other important physical features. Denver appears on the map, and Fort Collins is a speck compared to Laporte, which at that time was a small town but is now a village lying west of the city of Fort Collins. There are also maps of the telegraph stations along the Overland trail.

APPENDIX

The Collins family Bible is now in the possession of G.A.R. Post No. 58, Collins, but the family records have been cut out of it.

Valuable maps, official reports, records and letters of both Colonel Collins and Caspar are now in my files.

Upon the death of Miss Josephine Collins, the rector of the Episcopal Church at Hillsboro, Ohio, sent to the rector of St. Mark's Church at Casper, Wyoming, a legacy of one hundred dollars left by Miss Collins as a permanent memorial to her brother. The money was used in the spring of 1919 to purchase a handsome silver communion service for the church, which was used for the first time on Easter Sunday.

MONUMENT

On July 5, 1920, Mrs. Thomas Cooper, regent of the Ft. Caspar Chapter of the D.A.R., unveiled a monument which had been placed to the memory of Lieutenant Collins. The monument bears the inscription:

THE OREGON TRAIL COMMISSION

Unveiled by Fort Caspar
Chapter D.A.R.
July 5, 1920
Oregon Trail
Marked by State of Wyoming
1914
Lt. Caspar W. Collins
killed by Sioux Indians
near this spot
July 26, 1865